

## **Agenda**

Notice of a public meeting of

# **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,  
Steve Mason, Andrew Murday, Andy Paraskos,  
Yvonne Peacock, Kirsty Poskitt, John Ritchie.  
  
Tom Cavell-Taylor, Emma Higgins, Stephen Jennings,  
Anna Kirkham, Yvonne Methley, David Sharp,  
Ross Strachan and David Watson.

**Date:** Friday, 4th October, 2024

**Time:** 10.00 am

**Venue:** The Grand, County Hall, Northallerton, DL7 8AD

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

Members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting as observers for all those items taken in open session. Please contact the Senior Scrutiny Officer, whose details are below, if you would like to find out more.

You may also be interested in subscribing to updates about this or any other North Yorkshire Council committee - <https://edemocracy.northyorks.gov.uk/ieLogon.aspx?RPID=4452570&HPID=4452570&Forms=1&META=mgSubscribeLogon>

This meeting is being held as an in-person meeting.

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, a copy of which is available. Anyone wishing to record is asked to contact, prior to the start of the meeting, the Senior Scrutiny Officer. We ask that any recording is clearly visible to anyone at the meeting and that it is non-disruptive.

### **Business**

- 1. Welcome by the Chair**
- 2. Apologies for Absence**
- 3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 June 2024**

(Pages 3 - 16)

**4. Declarations of Interest**

**5. Public Participation**

Any member of the public who lives, works or studies in North Yorkshire can ask questions or make statements to the Committee. The questions or statements must be put in writing to the Committee no later than midday on Tuesday 1 October 2024, three working days before the day of the meeting, Alice Fox, Senior Scrutiny Officer (contact details given at the foot of the agenda sheet).

No one question or statement shall exceed 3 minutes. The time period for asking and responding to all questions will be 30 minutes. 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;
- 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. Child Death Overview Panel Annual Report 2023/2024** (Pages 17 - 26)

**8. North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2023/2024** (Pages 27 - 70)

**9. Children Accessing Alternative Provision** TO FOLLOW

**10. Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic - Consultation with Care Leavers** (Pages 71 - 82)

**11. Work Programme** (Pages 83 - 86)

**12. Any Other Items**

Any other items which the Chair agrees should be considered as a matter of urgency because of special circumstances.

**13. Date of Next Meeting**

Friday, 6 December 2024 at 10.00am

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. Email: [alice.fox@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:alice.fox@northyorks.gov.uk) Tel: 07712 539012.

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

Thursday, 26 September 2024

## North Yorkshire Council

### Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2024 at 10.03 a.m.

**Present:** Councillor Barbara Brodigan (Chair)

Councillors Alyson Baker, Stephanie Duckett, Caroline Goodrick (Vice-Chair, via Teams), George Jabbour (substitute for Tom Jones), David Jeffels, Janet Jefferson (via Teams), Peter Lacey (substitute for Andrew Murday), Cliff Lunn, John Mann, Andy Paraskos, Yvonne Peacock, Kirsty Poskitt (via Teams), John Ritchie and Karin Sedgwick (substitute for Nathan Hull).

Co-opted Members: Stephen Jennings (Primary Sector Representative), David Sharp (Voluntary Sector Representative) and Ross Strachan (Secondary Teacher Representative, via Teams).

Officers (Children and Young People's Service, unless stated): Stuart Carlton, Corporate Director, Rosie Appleby, Head of Placement Support, Sally Dunn, Head of Finance (School, Early Years and High Needs), Howard Emmett, Assistant Director, Resources, Jon Holden, Head of Strategic Planning, Mel Hutchinson, Assistant Director, Children and Families, Amanda Newbold, Assistant Director, Education and Skills, Louise Wilson, Head of School Improvement, Marie-Ann Jackson, Head of Localities, Alice Skaith, Holiday Activities and Food Co-ordinator, Simone Wilkinson, Group Manager, Early Help, Alice Fox, Senior Scrutiny Officer, Legal and Democratic Services.

In attendance: Councillor Janet Sanderson (Executive Member for Children and Families) and Councillor Annabel Wilkinson (Executive Member for Education and Skills).

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

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#### 10. Welcome by the Chair

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. She reminded Members that as we are the pre-election period, to be mindful of avoiding giving an individual or a political group a platform by which they can influence public opinion. The Chair informed the Committee that there was a change in the order of agenda items, with Items 9 and 10 becoming Items 8 and 9, and Item 8 now being Item 10.

#### 11. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nathan Hull, Tom Jones and Andrew Murday. Councillors Karin Sedgwick, George Jabbour and Pete Lacey attended as substitute members. Apologies from co-opted Members Andrew Smith, Tom Cavell-Taylor and David Watson.

#### 12. Minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024

##### **Resolved –**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

### **13. Any Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Caroline Goodrick declared an interest in the Citizens Advice Bureau, and Councillor Kirsty Poskitt and David Sharp declared an interest in FEAST.

### **14. Public Participation**

Six statements had been received from members of the public. In accordance with the Council Constitution, a maximum of 5 statements (in order of receipt) were accepted by the Chair and read as follows:

#### **1. The following statement was read out by Stephen Coe:**

- I wish to bring to the committee's attention that the process of assigning special school placements is opaque and causing parents of the county enormous distress.
- The process also has no audit trails, as records of decisions are not routinely kept, which prevents any improvement work or ability of families to understand the system.
- As such, the system is open to abuse and corruption due to preferential treatment, fabrication of assessment results, and the cultural view that consulting families. and communicating with them 'takes too long'.
- That the SEND team is using the tribunal system to triage children into SEN places.

#### **Stuart Carlton, Corporate Director, Children and Young People's Service, provided the following response:**

Decision making relating to the admission of a child or young person to a special school is governed by the requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014 and related SEND Code of Practice( CoP). Information about this is available on North Yorkshire's Local Offer website, as are details of organisations who can offer independent advice and support.

The Law secures the general presumption in law of mainstream education in relation to decisions about where children and young people with SEN should be educated and the Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination for disabled people.

To access special school a child or young person must have an Education Health and Care plan. This Plan includes information about their special educational needs and the education health and care provision that is required to meet their needs. This is a holistic view of the child or young person and is based on all information available to the LA at the time.

The final EHCP also names the educational school or setting. This section is concluded following discussion with a child's family and the young person themselves, as well as an analysis of all of the assessment information available. Should a parent/carer express that they want a special school place then the Local Authority must consult with that school irrespective of whether it feels that school is able to meet needs.

Placement decisions are made in accordance with the CoP Section 9.79:

If a child's parent or a young person makes a request for a particular nursery, school, or post-16 institution in these groups the local authority must comply with that preference and name the school or college in the EHC plan unless:

- it would be unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or SEN of the child or young person, or



- the attendance of the child or young person there would be incompatible with the efficient education of others, or the efficient use of resources

We have high aspirations for all children and young people with SEND in North Yorkshire. We want them to:

- Have the best opportunities so that they achieve the best outcomes
- Be able to attend a school or provision close to home, where they can make friends and develop their place within their local community

Of course, each child has an individual presentation, and each family has views about the provision they feel is appropriate and consequently each decision is unique but always guided by the requirements of the Code of Practice and associated case law. There are occasions where a family and the Local Authority do not agree on a placement decision, and it is acknowledged that this can be difficult for families.

If families are concerned about the processes which have not been resolved through discussion, then there is an option to make a formal complaint at either Stage 1 or Stage 2. Following this a family can make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman should there be grounds to do so.

We take all information from compliments and complaint seriously. This helps us to develop our practice. If there is an unresolved disagreement about a placement, then a family can appeal to the SEND tribunal

Record keeping is important and are kept for each child in the SEND system including assessment information, EHCPs, annual reviews, consultation responses from schools. Overall analysis of County wide data including decisions made, trends, demands and areas of emerging need is undertaken and reviewed regularly to inform processes and provision planning.

All decisions made are taking with care, with the child at the centre, and without any bias. Effective communication is seen as a central element to good practice and is through conversation and e mail. The SEND team have recently undertaken a full review of our processes including developing their approaches to effective communication with families.

Whilst the tribunal system offers families and young people an important right of appeal it is not a route we would want to go down - we always aim to find shared solutions before this point through discussion or formal mediation. Of course, any decision which is made by tribunal must be adhered to.

## **2. The following statement was read out by Verity Shepherd:**

I am Verity Shepherd. I adopted my 2 children 14 years ago. I am a Learning Disability Nurse of 22 years and a special school nurse of 7 years. I am here to share my views regarding the huge failings in the adoption system that left my family in a state of crisis for years, resulting in our son prematurely leaving the family home due to his dangerous behaviours being beyond our control. Once our son moved out of our family home, the support offered surged to the level that he had always needed. We now parent him from a distance and this works well for him. Before adoption, my son suffered pre-birth and developmental trauma and separation from his birth family causing Attachment Disorder and Early Life Trauma issues. We were not told about the reasons behind his behaviour until he was 10 years old despite him being assessed but discharged by various services for 5 years. Shared experience of many adopters suggests that prior to adoption, children will have suffered trauma, while the adopters will have undergone a rigorous screening process. Yet the Adoption Support Fund mainly focuses on parenting courses as if trauma has little to do with the child's behaviour.

Our story is one of almost 800 similar stories shared on Facebook support groups. To best demonstrate the flaws within adoption, I will compare adopters to foster carers (although I do not wish to de-value the work they do):-

**In terms of training** - Foster carers are told exactly what behaviours to expect. Adopters are 'sold' adoption as a way to have a happy family and they are not forewarned of the catastrophic effects of the pre-adoption trauma.

**In terms of expectations** - Foster carers are seen as doing their best with a foster child who has issues. Adopters are judged and blamed for their child's behaviour by the very people who are meant to be helping them, and in some cases issued with child protection orders.

**In terms of education** - Foster children are offered suitable support and it is automatically recognised that they will have issues. Adopted children have the same expectations as birth children, and are often labelled as 'Naughty'.

**In terms of respite and 'notice'** - Foster carers get respite as requested and they can give 2 weeks' notice- less than most jobs. Adopters BEG (unsuccessfully) for respite over years of crisis. When they are forced to request that their child moves out of the family home, they are left for months without support, told they risk being charged with abandonment, fobbed off, and told there are "no placements available". The only way to spur social services to action is to heartbreakingly instruct a solicitor to request a Section 20 and make their child homeless.

**In terms of finances** - Foster carers receive up to £450 per week.

Adopters could therefore be seen as the largest body of volunteers in the country. In conclusion, for children with these issues, the Adoption system and Support Fund are not fit for purpose and need a total overhaul with adopters in crisis being used to assist this process.

### **3. The following statement was read out by Samantha Smith:**

My name is Samantha Smith, I have BSC (Hons) in Biomedical Sciences. After working as a research scientist I became a science teacher. I have been teaching for over 20 years. In 2010 my husband and I adopted 2 siblings. Our daughter was aged 2.5 years and our son aged 15 months. This was following 18 months of intense scrutiny, training and multiple panels to be approved as adopters. That was the start of our story. Currently we are at the point where only our 16-year-old son is living in the family home, our daughter now 17 lives elsewhere on a section 20. She moved out on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023. At this point we had been in crisis for more than 2 years, desperately asking for help. The service we received fell far short of what our family needed and deserved. We were made to feel that it was our fault, that the extreme behaviours our daughter showed were 'normal teenage behaviours'. We were ignored and my family fell apart. Unfortunately, my story is not unique. I am on a Facebook group with around 800 families, all who have or are experiencing the breakdown of their family. Children leaving the family home prematurely and going to foster care, residential care or supported living arrangements.

Adoption UK do an annual nationwide survey of adoptive families, over 4000 families took part in 2023. The findings give an indication of the difficulties adoptive families face.

-The proportion of families reaching crisis point has risen from 30-38% from 2022-2023.

-38% of families are facing challenges but coping and only 24% were mostly doing well.

-69% of adoptive parents were less likely to feel optimistic about their family's future.

- 75% of families agreed that it felt like a continual battle to get the help and support that their families need.

- Additionally, there was an increase from 57-60% of parents who had experienced violence from their child.

-the figure for children leaving the family home prematurely (adoption disruption) has doubled from 2021 to 7% - this figure means that 100's of children in England are moving into other living arrangements.

Adoption can be an amazing experience; I love my children. However, ALL children who are adopted from the care system will have developmental trauma and attachment disorder. This needs to be recognised by the services that work with adoptive families. We are 'ultimate' parents, we are put on training courses, assessed, observed like no other parents. If we say we can't manage our children's extreme behaviours, then we need to be listened to and supported. These behaviours are textbook trauma responses. My husband and I know our children better than anyone else, we asked for respite. We knew with regular respite we would be able to manage. We didn't get any support that helped our family. For everyone's safety we had to make the heartbreaking decision to make our daughter homeless and request a S20. Once she was out of our home, she did get more support.

But in the 3 mins I have all I can say is it was also lacking, and she was in more danger than ever. We did complain to the authority and every part of our complaint was upheld at stage 3. This situation should never have happened. We should have been listened to and supported. We wanted to work with social services to safeguard our family and keep us together. Fortunately, we have stuck by our daughter, despite her best efforts to push us away. We are parenting from a distance. I am pushing for change so other families don't have to experience this. The adoption system and support is not fit for purpose, families need ongoing support.

**Mel Hutchinson, Assistant Director, Children and Families, provided the following response which encompassed Statements 1 and 2:**

Thank you to both Verity Shepherd and Samantha Smith, for sharing your views. We are sorry to hear the struggles you have both experienced as a family.

We know that many children who are placed for adoption may have had experiences where they have suffered neglect, trauma and loss which can have a significant impact on their development and well being over time. Children who are adopted have different and individual circumstances and needs that is personal to them and their family.

One Adoption complete in depth assessments and deliver training to assist individuals to understand some of those difficulties that children may experience as they grow and develop. We know the importance of having information shared openly to ensure individuals can make their own informed decision and choices about if adoption is right for them. There has been a great deal of research and a better understanding of trauma over the past 10 years which has influenced practice.

When families are struggling, they can receive support directly from the adoption support service, who offer a range of support to families for example training, activity days, peer mentoring, one to one and group support, therapeutic support, which may include therapeutic, enhanced adopter parenting courses, Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DPP), Theraplay and therapeutic life story work. We recognise that for some families they do experience child on parent violence and the adoption service have offered training on this for many years (Non violence resistance training, NVR). All this type of work assists and helps families to understand the needs of their children and how they as a family can be supported, we do understand this can be very difficult for families. The adoption service can access the Adoption Support Fund to request therapy where there is an assessed need.

There are children who may experience neurodiversity and receive a diagnosis for example autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and foetal alcohol spectrum disorder whether they have been adopted or not. However, we do recognise that those children who have experienced loss and trauma may have additional needs as well as any diagnosis i.e., attachment disorder.

Where adopted families are experiencing crisis and a breakdown of relationships this may require additional services either through Section 17, Child in Need or Child Protection, where there is significant risk. As a service we strive to work alongside families to support them as, we know that where it is right children are better remaining in their home environment wherever possible, or within their family network. Unfortunately for some this is not the case and children return into care, under S20 or under a Care Order, Children Act, 1989. It is not our intention for parents to feel that it is their fault or blamed in anyway. We know the importance of families needing to feel listened to and apologise if this has not been the case.

Virtual School do have duties to support adopters with advice and information where there are challenges for adopted children within their education. Virtual School also provide training to schools to understand complex trauma for those children that have had this experience.

We do acknowledge that some foster carers access respite care, but this is not all and is determined on availability and as part of their role. Families who adopt children it becomes their legal responsibility and consideration would be given to how the LA are able to support, where there is an assessed need, as with any other family living in North Yorkshire.

Foster carers do receive an allowance, which varies dependent on age. I can also confirm that many adopters also receive an allowance. This is dependent on their personal circumstances and financial assessed need.

We are committed to supporting adoptive families in the best way possible.

#### **4. The following statement was read out by Jakki Wilby:**

I am Jakki Wilby and I am Vice-Chair of the Scarborough, Whitby & Ryedale Foster Carers Association (FCA), and I want to tell the story of the journey we've been on in seeking to improve conditions for North Yorkshire foster carers. For many years, leaders of local FCAs have met with your managers to discuss issues of common concern. We have been treated courteously, but few of the significant changes we have sought have been granted. Whilst modest annual increases in allowances and fees have been implemented the lot of carers has become more demanding. We find ourselves in the strange position of being the backbone of a statutory service, but we have no rights - we are volunteers. In early 2022, we decided that we needed to campaign more effectively as FCAs working together across North Yorkshire. We petitioned Councillor Sanderson and Stuart Carlton with 170 foster carer signatures. A period of intensive discussion took place with a number of options considered. But most of these were ruled out. A modest package of improvements was introduced in April 2023, but we didn't think that these would solve either carers' or the Council's problems. It should be regarded as a first instalment.

As we continued to listen to carers, it was clear that this was not just about money it was also about lack of respect. Carers to drift away from caring and too few new ones were coming forward. We were moving towards a situation where private sector carers would be required. We don't want that, your managers do want it and it's far more expensive. But the system is at capacity, and local carers are under pressure to house more children. I'm one of them.

We undertook Freedom of Information requests to find out what it was costing other local authorities for an average week's childcare - everywhere else cost more. You're able to do this because the service is kept largely in-house. But the service is now operating in continual crisis. You desperately need to recruit more carers, but enquiries are insufficient. One of the reasons for this is that carers are generally unhappy, under-compensated and disrespected. Few of them will recommend North Yorkshire, and many of them 'want out'. We called a public meeting in February to explain our concerns and invited our local Councillors. Some of you attended and carefully listened to us - our carer testimonies and our suggested solutions. The general response from them was one of shock.

That's why we're here today. Since then, we have met again with Janet Sanderson, but there appears to be little in the way of a meeting of minds. This Spring our allowances and fees only increased in 2024 in line with inflation, and there has been no second instalment of the improvement package. Carers continue to leave but the number of children in care continues to rise. This problem is not going away.

**Mel Hutchinson, Assistant Director, Children and Families, provided the following response:**

Thank you, Jakki for sharing your views. We have been working closely with the FCA Chairs for many years, listening to your views, experiences, and your helpful voice in advocating for local foster carers. As you are aware I, Mel Hutchinson, Assistant Director have attended the FCA meetings to enable a close working relationship to address concerns promptly and listen to yours and local foster carers views. We agree that it is very important for foster carers to feel valued and respected. Training and discussions are continuous with the workforce, in particular with newly qualified social workers just starting out in their career. We were grateful for the work and collaboration with foster carers to produce a video which is now being delivered to social work teams around the importance of relationships, respect, and values. We have encouraged that if foster carers have any concerns, they escalate this directly to the social work manager in order to have a prompt response to resolving any concerns raised.

In North Yorkshire, every year all Foster Carer payments are uplifted on 1<sup>st</sup> April by the rate of CPI Inflation the previous December. In 2022, when inflation increased rapidly in the year, the extra ordinary step of making a mid-year increase on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 was also made, this was due to the rise in cost-of-living pressures, recognising this was the right thing to do. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2023, the Accredited Premium was boosted above the rate of inflation, as well as implementing new 'bridging payments' of up to three weeks for Accredited Foster Carers. We also implemented that all mileage was allowed to be claimed (previously Foster Carers had been expected to pay for the first 100 miles out of the child's Allowance). We also offered the staff benefit scheme, Vivup and paid £500 golden hello for newly approved carers and recommend a friend. This totalled in the order of £300K of additional funding to Foster Carers. This was directly in response to hearing the views of foster carers and whilst it did not meet all the requests that the petition highlighted, it did improve the overall package to our foster carers.

North Yorkshire's Foster Carer payments are above the government nationally recommended minimum for Allowance payments. We also complete a bench marking exercise regularly which is carried out within the Yorkshire and Humber Region. This was completed in the summer of 2023 and only Bradford paid the equivalent of Accredited Foster Carers more than North Yorkshire.

The Freedom of Information to gather the costings of other LAs would be higher than NY, this is because many go out to the private market for Independent Fostering Agency's that cost significantly more than LA rates. North Yorkshire work hard to keep children within NY and within our own foster carers. Many children who come into our care are placed with their family as connected foster carers and this is

in line with our practice model of keeping children living with their family wherever possible.

We have seen a rise in the number of children needing to come into our care for example, Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children through the National Transfer Service. These children are not solely placed into foster care, those that are 16 plus are placed into supported accommodation which North Yorkshire have made significant investment, funded by the UASC grant, in order to provide appropriate accommodation.

Whilst we have seen a reduction of enquiries since covid and the cost-of-living increase, which has been seen nationally we are now starting to see an upward trend, which is positive however, we recognise there is still more to do. I can confirm we have now been able to pay up to 16 golden hello/recommend a friend payments.

**5. The following statement was read out by Keith Miller:**

My name is Keith and my wife and I have been fostering for nearly 15 years and have looked after 29 children in that time. Currently we have three in care and until last Sunday it was four, as the boy turned 18.

When we talk together and with other foster carers at formal and informal events there are many aspects of fostering that are being questioned now, and they come together as different themes. One of these themes is the distancing of children's social workers from children and foster carers, so much so that many present themselves as focussed on process, procedure and protocol compliance as opposed to problem resolution.

Today social workers will say, "I have to do a statutory visit and want to come at this time", whereas before it used to be, "How are things going and when can I visit?" In not being as close to the placements, there is greater emphasis on our ability to advocate for children, but we find the system slower to respond than a few years ago, and as one social worker said recently, social workers can be told off for challenging the system even when it's in the child's interest to do so. There is now clear evidence of where social workers and their managers put pressure on foster carers to pick up the slack when the system does not provide that to which children are entitled.

We all understand the wider context within which Children's Services has to operate and can sympathise with the conflicting considerations. But at the front line operational level, we see a system under pressure which will often use foster carers as its release valve, and without consideration for the consequences for us and the children in our care.

My wife and I are very happy to continue looking after children and we are also keen to play a constructive and positive role in making things work better for foster carers and children. Without foster carers there is no fostering service.

**Mel Hutchinson, Assistant Director, Children and Families, provided the following response:**

Mr Miller thank you for your submission to the scrutiny panel. I was sorry to read that you feel children's social workers are not as visible as they previously used to be. Social workers have statutory duties to visit children regularly as part of the care planning regulations. We know that building relationships is key to developing effective working together and ensuring the plan and team around the child is working well. We would encourage foster carers to contact managers if they are not receiving visits appropriately or any other concern they may have.

We continually listen to the views of foster carers and regularly review feedback received into the service. There is a current piece of work being completed with Social Workers ensuring they are understanding of the importance of the role that foster carers do and see them as part of the team around the child and promoting joint working. There has been a video completed in partnership with foster carers which is being rolled out to all workers and particularly to our newly qualified social workers. The video is being used as part of the induction programme for new staff. All managers within the service have seen the video and are fully sighted to it.

I can confirm we have seen an increase in the number of children in our care since the pandemic, and cost of living crisis which has created extra pressures on the Fostering Service. We do contact foster carers when searching for placements to enquire if they may consider offering a placement. Where carers do not wish to be contacted, we respect this decision and ensure this does not happen. We do understand that at times there can be a number of calls about children.

We value the commitment and care shown to our children in North Yorkshire. We want to see all of our children thrive and we know that fostering families provide this opportunity, for which we are extremely grateful. We regularly meet with the FCA chairs and have various meeting and liaison meetings with other teams reviewing feedback from carers to continuously reflect and improve our service.

## 15. Chair's Remarks

The Chair was unable to attend Full Council on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024, however, she did submit the following questions to Councillor Janet Sanderson, Executive Member for Children and Families and Councillor Annabel Wilkinson, Executive Member for Education and Skills. Their responses are below:

**What is the current rate of achievement of completing EHCPs within the statutory time limit and how is NYC dealing with the complaints and threats of legal action that have been received from some parents?**

### Response

Since 2015 we have seen an increase of 233.6% new plans issued in North Yorkshire. Timeliness of EHCPs has decreased both Nationally and Regionally. We have now improved our timeliness 2 years in a row (2022 and 2023), moving us to a similar position to the latest reported national average and better than most recently reported statistical neighbour average. Requests in calendar year 2023 were the highest ever received, approx. 39% higher than the previous year, which was the then highest ever received number of requests in a calendar year. Since 2021, owing to the increase in demand for EHC assessments and the lack of Education Psychologists (EP) locally and nationally, we have commissioned external temporary support to meet EHC demand. Whilst this enabled the Council to meet an increase in demand and improve timeliness of assessments in 2022 and 2023, from the autumn of 2023 the availability of temporary EP's was such that we needed to further strength our supply of temporary workers and increase rates to attract the required capacity. Whilst this has supported the meeting of demand into 2024, a backlog of assessment is being worked through. Fortnightly performance and improvement meetings are in place to constantly performance manage the temporary staff programmes. With this increase in supply and rates now in place, capacity has increased, and we forecast being able to clear the backlog this year. As the backlog is cleared, the out of timescales plan is then recorded. As a result of the out-of-date plans going on record, we see performance numbers drop, and this is what we are seeing on the current statistic reports. This will however improve throughout the year when the backlog is completed. It is also worth noting that the number of requests for plans has now dropped for 4 Quarters in a row, which is very welcome news, but still remains significantly higher than it did in 21/22. Alongside these temporary measures, we have strengthened our direct workforce. We have recruited a Principal EP, increased the team numbers, and have recruited five EP's

from abroad that will arrive in our teams later this year. We then plan to recruit assistant and trainee EPs to complete the team. In the interim the SEND casework team have strengthened their communication, so parents are aware of the current challenges within the statutory assessment process. There is a Caseworker attached to each child undergoing assessment and they remain the single point of contact in order to support parents through the process. Case work officers are trying to maintain regular communication with parents. Parents are also able to use the corporate complaints policy if they remain unhappy and of course seek out further assistance from the Local Government Ombudsman.

**What percentage of children and young people in North Yorkshire are deemed to be disadvantaged? What % of funding for outdoor education have these children been able to access?**

**Response**

Research into the long-term impact of outdoor education residential visits for children and young people identifies lasting impacts including, increases in self-confidence, independence, improved communication, and teamwork. 17% of all school age children and young people in North Yorkshire are deemed to be disadvantaged. For context, whilst this number has increased since the pandemic, it remains below the national figure which is around 20%. As I said in my response to a very similar question you asked at Full Council last July "It is the responsibility of the individual governing bodies to determine how they support pupils to attend all types of residential visit, whether with the council's outdoor learning service or elsewhere." The council's outdoor learning service does not receive any routine 'funding' to support access. It is a traded service where each school /other organisation will make a booking for a group of pupils and the school / other organisation will decide if they use pupil premium or other funding source to support children with costs for residential and other day-time outdoor learning activities (eg forest schools). These activities can take place in school, through one of the NYC centres or through a third party and so the council does not hold these records.

NOTED.

**16. School Governance – Roles and Responsibilities of Governing Boards and the Relationship between the Local Authority and Maintained Schools**

**Considered –**

A presentation by Amanda Newbold, Assistant Director, Education and Skills, Jon Holden, Head of Strategic Planning CYPS, Louise Wilson, Head of School Improvement and Sally Dunn, Head of Finance (Schools, Early Years and High Needs).

The Chair explained that this agenda item was requested a result of the Call-In meeting held in April 2024 regarding the proposed closure of Fountains Earth Primary School. It was agreed that further information about roles and responsibilities of governing boards, and the support that the council offers to school would help the Committee gain a better insight around processes and procedures.

The presentation comprised of three elements:

- North Yorkshire Schools' Context
- Responsibilities, including LA support for governors
- School closures in North Yorkshire

The key points are summarised below:

- Everyone agreed school governors and governing bodies do an outstanding job.



- It isn't always the closure of a school that impacts the community, it's often other factors that occur before a school closes that creates the impact. These include elements such as not enough affordable housing or jobs, and low pupil numbers.
- Extensive consultation and procedures are followed which is a lengthy and thorough process, and it will be at least 2 years before a governing body will contact a local authority to explore closing a school.
- Whilst some schools are closing, new ones are opening or merging with others, and NYC is always available to support and update governing boards and local Councillors throughout the process.

It was proposed that a working group could be considered to look at the impact of school closures and the support provided. It was also proposed to pause school closures, particularly in the more rural areas, until the local plans have been completed. After considerable debate, the majority of members felt that a working group wasn't necessary because there is already adequate support provided to communities, parents and children, and an ongoing dialogue between governing bodies and the authority. Factors such as birth rates and new housing plans are reviewed on a regular basis and taken into consideration so a pause isn't required.

NOTED.

#### **17. Update on the Holiday Activity and Food Programme in North Yorkshire – FEAST (Food, Entertainment, Art and Sport Together)**

**Considered –**

A presentation of the FEAST Impact Report 2023 by Alice Skaith, Holiday Activities and Food Co-Ordinator, Children and Young People's Services. A short video about the project is available here:

<https://app.frame.io/presentations/f2bfb963-309e-46e0-aca5-4ef527ad874d>

Alice explained that FEAST provides a range of free holiday activities to the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people across the county, including young carers, refugees and asylum seekers, and children with SEND. Those who receive free school meals automatically qualify.

The key points are summarised below:

- The DfE have funded FEAST through their Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) grant since 2021/22 and 2024/25 is the final year of that funding period. Funding has increased over the years, but not in line with the growing demand. This year they received a grant of £1.4 million.
- Children receive free healthy food that meets the School Food Standard, and FEAST supports families through promoting healthy lifestyles (providing recipe cards and ingredients) and signposting to services (such as foodbanks).
- They work in partnership with over 80 local voluntary and community-based providers and the team is encouraging them to look for additional funding so that they can continue the work after 2025. All of the providers comply within the DfE framework. There are 12 specialist SEND providers.
- FEAST are always mindful to deliver activities in the more rural parts of the county and transport can be provided (Council approved taxis). Selby is one of the areas where provision has grown significantly.
- Some Councillors have funded FEAST activities and meals by allocating some of their locality budget.

Members asked if there had been an impact on provision if demand for take-up has increased. Marie-Ann Jackson, Head of Localities, explained that it is the DfE's ambition that all children should have access to an activity within one mile of where they live. However, given the geographical make up of the county, this was never going to be possible for NYC. They have had to limit the number of places to be able to offer provision in the more rural areas. There is also a ringfenced budget for one-to-one and two-to-one specialist care for children with SEND.

One Councillor asked if there was evidence of an increase in benefits take-up from families accessing FEAST. This is not something that had been explored but could be looked at.

It was agreed that FEAST has been a massive success and extremely far-reaching, enabling children to access other grant funded schemes.

NOTED.

Councillor Mann left the meeting at 12.20pm

## **18. Fostering North Yorkshire Update**

**Considered –**

An update from Mel Hutchinson, Assistant Director for Children and Families.

The key points are summarised below:

- There have been 17 Golden Hello's of £500 since January 2023.
- Over 75% of children living in foster homes are in stable long-term arrangements.
- There has been an increase in children under 5 and 5-9 living in foster care, whilst the largest cohort of carers is 55-59yrs.
- There is a very strong performance in health and dental check-ups, Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQs), and Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for children in care.

The Committee heard from one Member of their personal experience and the growing pressures on being a foster carer. There was also concern of the rising number of younger children requiring care, especially considering the ageing population of carers. A Member suggested that a task and finish group could be set up to look at how foster carers can be better supported.

It was pointed out to the Committee that NYC's Fostering Service have many more carers compared to other local authorities, this is an indication that the majority are happy and pleased with the level of support they receive, which offers reassurance. It was important to put things into perspective and Members have spoken to many foster carers who have no complaints about the service.

After a lengthy debate, the majority of the Committee decided that a task and finish group was not required. It was accepted that there will always be some instances where foster carers experience challenges, and the Corporate Director urged them to contact the service with any concerns. The Assistant Director explained that they are always looking at ways to improve the service and investigate all complaints.

NOTED

## **19. Annual Report of the Young People's Champion**

**Considered –**

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

The report highlighted the range of activities, engagement, and networking which Councillor Baker has participated in on behalf of the council. She pointed out that she has also supported and signposted a lot of families to council services. She congratulated Children's and Young People's Service on their work and Ofsted achievement. The Committee thanked Councillor Baker.

NOTED.

## **20. Treating Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic**

### **Considered –**

A report by Stuart Carlton, Corporate Director for Children and Young People's Service.

This item is in response to the Notice of Motion at Full Council on May 15<sup>th</sup> 2024, which called to treat care experience as a protected characteristic. The Committee agreed the first step would be to consult with care leavers to hear their views, as engaging with them is paramount. They would like to hear if care leavers have experienced any discrimination. They asked the Corporate Parenting Members' Group to lead on this and report back at the next Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on October 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **Resolved –**

That the Committee:

- (a) Notes the report provided;
- (b) Ask the Corporate Parenting Members Group to lead on a consultation with care leavers for their views on whether NYC should adopt care experience as a protected characteristic;
- (c) Receive an update at October's meeting.

## **21. Work Programme 2024/2025**

### **Considered –**

A report by Alice Fox, Senior Scrutiny Officer, which invited Members to consider the Committee's Work Programme for 2024/2025.

### **Resolved –**

That the Work Programme, as it stands, be noted.

## **22. Any other Items**

The Chair advised that she had no other Items of business to raise.

## **23. Date of Next meeting**

This would be held on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at County Hall in Northallerton, commencing at 10.00 a.m.

The meeting concluded at 1.10 p.m.

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# Child Death Overview Panel Annual Report 2023-2024





# Child Death Overview Panel Annual Report 2023-2024

## Foreword

As chair of the Child Death Overview Panel, I would like to take this opportunity to focus on the professionals who make up the panel. The expertise provided by panel members facilitates open discussion and detailed analysis. It is only through their continued commitment in coming together with care, diligence and respect for our children that we are able to raise awareness of issues which can be mitigated and contribute to keeping children safe and as well as possible.

This commitment means that during this year we have been able to form a dedicated sub-group which will lead on communication campaigns agreed by the panel. Over the coming year we will continue to formulate and produce materials to help people understand the importance of children and young people being visible to road users and traveling safely especially during the winter months. We will also be highlighting the need to have an adult who is responsible for children and young people which may mean a designated person who abstains from alcohol at family gatherings such as BBQs and family occasions.

Our deepest condolences are always with those families who are bereaved.

Anita Dobson, Nurse Consultant in Public Health, City of York Council, Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) Chair



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# Introduction

One of the most devastating things for a family to experience is the death of a child and it is recognised that this will have a profound and long-lasting impact on everyone involved in that child's life. All deaths of children up to the age of 18 years, excluding stillbirths and planned terminations, have been reviewed by the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) since April 2008. The Child Death Review process is undertaken in accordance with national guidance and statutory guidance set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. The Child Death Review Statutory and Operational Guidance 2018 builds on the requirements set out in Chapter 6 of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

The purpose of the Child Death Review Process is to try to ascertain the cause of a child death's and put in place interventions to protect other children and prevent future deaths wherever possible. The process intends to;

- Document, analyse and review information in relation to each child that dies to confirm the cause of death, determine any contributing factors and to identify learning arising from the process that may prevent future child deaths
- To make recommendations to all relevant organisations where actions have been identified which may prevent future deaths or promote the health, safety and wellbeing of children
- To produce an annual report highlighting local patterns and trends in child death, any lessons learnt and actions taken, and the effectiveness of the wider Child Death Review Process
- To contribute to local, regional and national initiatives to improve learning from Child Death Reviews.

Child Death Review partners, the Local Authorities and Integrated Care Boards for North Yorkshire and City of York have a responsibility to undertake the Child Death Review Process as set out in the Children Act 2004, and as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

The CDOP is multi-agency with differing areas of professional expertise with the child death review process being undertaken locally for all children who are normally resident within North Yorkshire and City of York.

North Yorkshire and City of York Local Authorities and Integrated Care Boards created a Strategic Child Death Review Group to provide strategic oversight for the Child Death Review Process. Meetings are held twice a year and the membership includes:

- Directors of Children and Young People's Services (NYC and CYC)
- Chief Nurses for the Integrated Care Board (Humber and North Yorkshire ICB)
- Designated Doctor for Child Death (Humber and North Yorkshire ICB)
- Child Death Overview Panel Chair (CYC Public Health)
- Child Death Overview Panel Vice-Chair (NYC Public Health)
- Partnership Business Unit Managers (NYSCP and CYSCP)
- Child Death Review Officer (NYSCP)

The collation and sharing of all learning from Child Death Reviews and the CDOP is managed by the National Child Mortality Database (NCMD) which has been operational since 1st April 2019. The NCMD gathers information on all children who die across England with the aim to learn lessons to reduce child mortality.

# Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)

The Child Death Overview Panel has a statutory requirement to review all deaths of children normally resident in the local area and of any non-resident children who have died in their area.

## Membership and Panel Meetings

The Child Death Overview Panel meetings are held on a bi-monthly basis, the membership can be seen below:

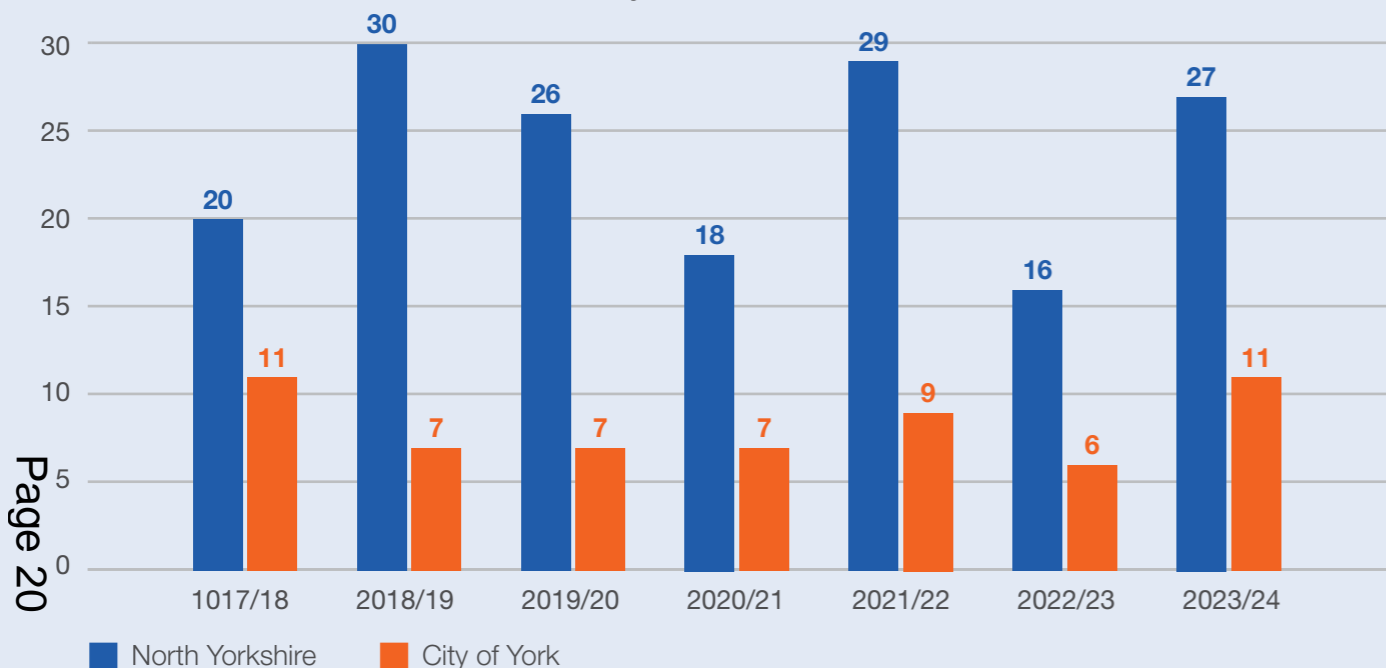
Member	Role and Organisation
Anita Dobson	Nurse Consultant in Public Health, City of York Council
Dr Gill Kelly	Public Health Consultant, North Yorkshire Council
Jemma Cormack	NYP Safeguarding Manager
Dave Ellis	Detective Inspector, North Yorkshire Police
Dr Sally Smith	Designated Doctor for Child Death
Dr Natalie Lyth	Designated Doctor for Safeguarding Children & Children in Care, North Yorkshire & Humber ICB (York & North Yorkshire Place)
Dr Sarah Snowden	Designated Doctor for Safeguarding Children & Children in Care, North Yorkshire & Humber ICB (York & North Yorkshire Place)
Hannah Ellingworth	NYSCP Manager
Sophia Lenton-Brook	CYSCP Manager
Dallas Frank	Head of Safeguarding, Children's Social Care
Sarah Howarth	Team Manager, Children's Social Care
Rosie Conlin	Named Nurse, Child Protection, North Yorkshire, HDFT
Helen Pulleyn	Named Nurse for Safeguarding, YSTHFT
Andrea Pitman	Healthy Child Team Service Manager, CYC
Leanne Likaj	Head of Midwifery, HDFT
Sascha Wells-Munro	Head of Midwifery, YSTHFT
Alison Brunton	Child Death Review Officer

# Data Analysis 2023 - 2024

A total number of 38 children and young people residing in North Yorkshire and City of York died between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024.

## Total Child Deaths

Table 1: Child Deaths in North Yorkshire and City of York 2017 - 2024



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## Age of Child Deaths

Table 2: Age of Child Deaths in North Yorkshire and City of York 2023 - 2024

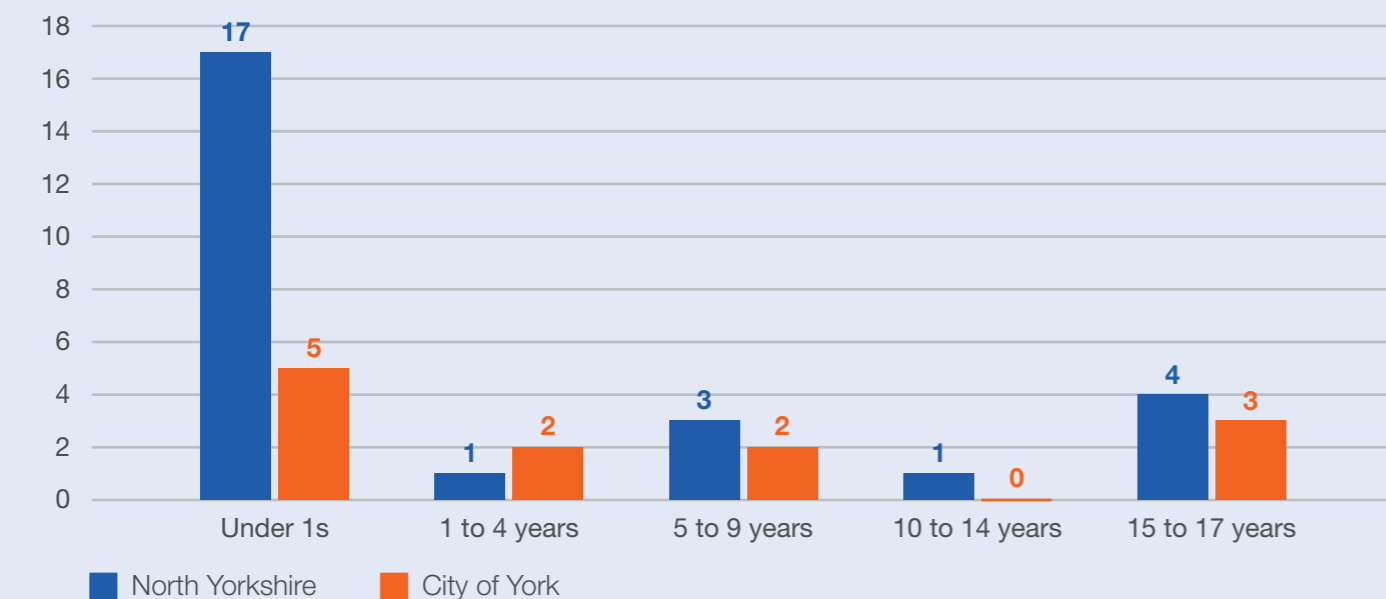


Table 2 summarises the age of North Yorkshire and City of York children at death over the last year.

The highest number of child deaths consistently relates to children under 1 year of age. In 2023/2024, 58% of child deaths related to children in this age range compared to 68% in the previous year.

Child deaths fall under one of two categories:

- **Expected Death:** A child death is an “expected” death when the death of an infant or child was anticipated, such as for children born with life-limiting conditions.
- **Unexpected Death:** An unexpected death is defined as a death that was not anticipated as a significant possibility 24 hours before the death, or where there was a similarly unexpected collapse leading to or precipitating the events which led to the death.

## Expected and Unexpected Child Deaths

Table 3:

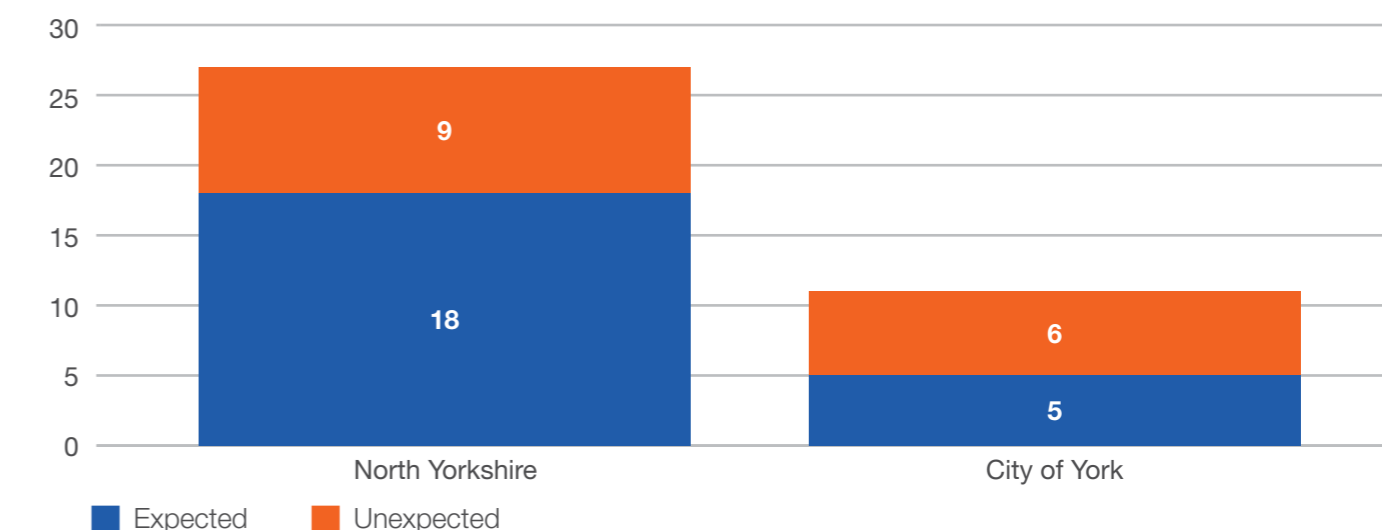


Table 3 shows the number of expected and unexpected deaths between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

## Child Deaths by Gender

Nationally the mortality rate for males is higher than females and the deaths reported to this CDOP for 2023-2024 reflect this national picture.

Table 4:

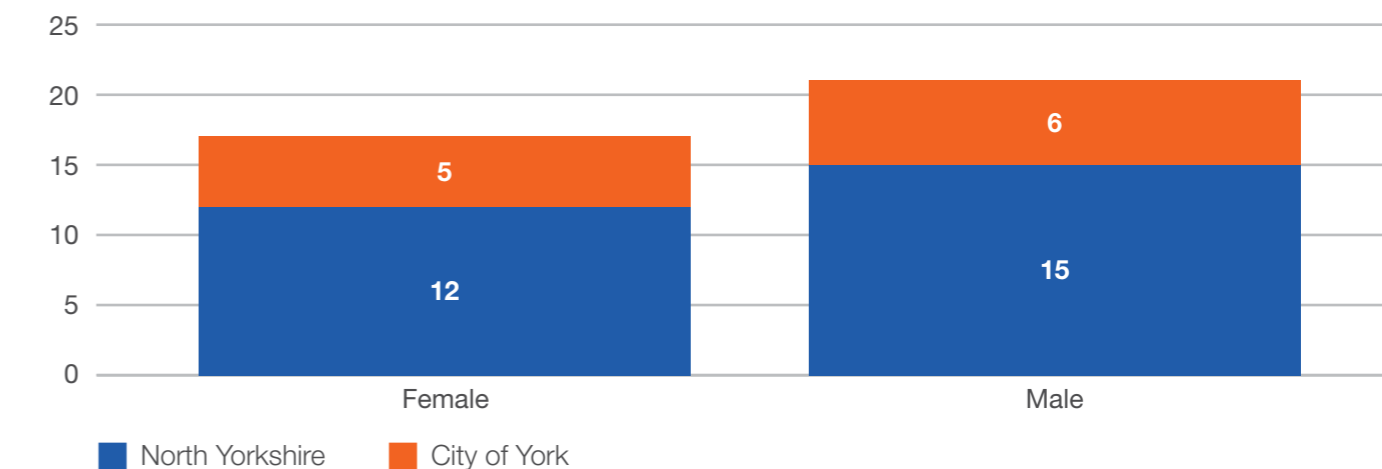


Table 4 provides the breakdown of the number of child deaths by gender



## Ethnicity

Of the 38 child deaths notified to this CDOP between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, 35 were classified as “White British”, 1 “Asian British” and 2 were recorded as “Other” which reflects the demographics of North Yorkshire and the City of York.

## Disabled children

Prior to 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023, there was no longer a requirement for deaths of children with a learning disability to be notified to Learning Disabilities Mortality Review Programme (LeDeR) as all details relating to learning disabilities are collected via the NCMD notification forms.

## Child Death Processes

The notification of a child’s death is received by the Child Death Review Officer who will ensure all relevant agencies complete a reporting form. This form captures all the relevant information about the child and family to inform the child death overview process. In addition to the reporting form there are a number of supplementary forms which the Child Death Review Officer uses to collect information from relevant professionals. All this information is collated for review by the CDOP and is shared with the NCMD.

The Coroner is responsible for determining the cause of death and carrying out a post-mortem examination where appropriate. Where the post-mortem examination is not able to identify cause, or the death is found to be unnatural, the Coroner will hold an inquest to examine any relevant factors in order to provide details on the cause of death.

## Categories of Child Deaths

All child deaths discussed at CDOP are categorised using a national template “analysis form” provided by the NCMD. This information is reported back to the NCMD who annually provide national data on deaths of children.

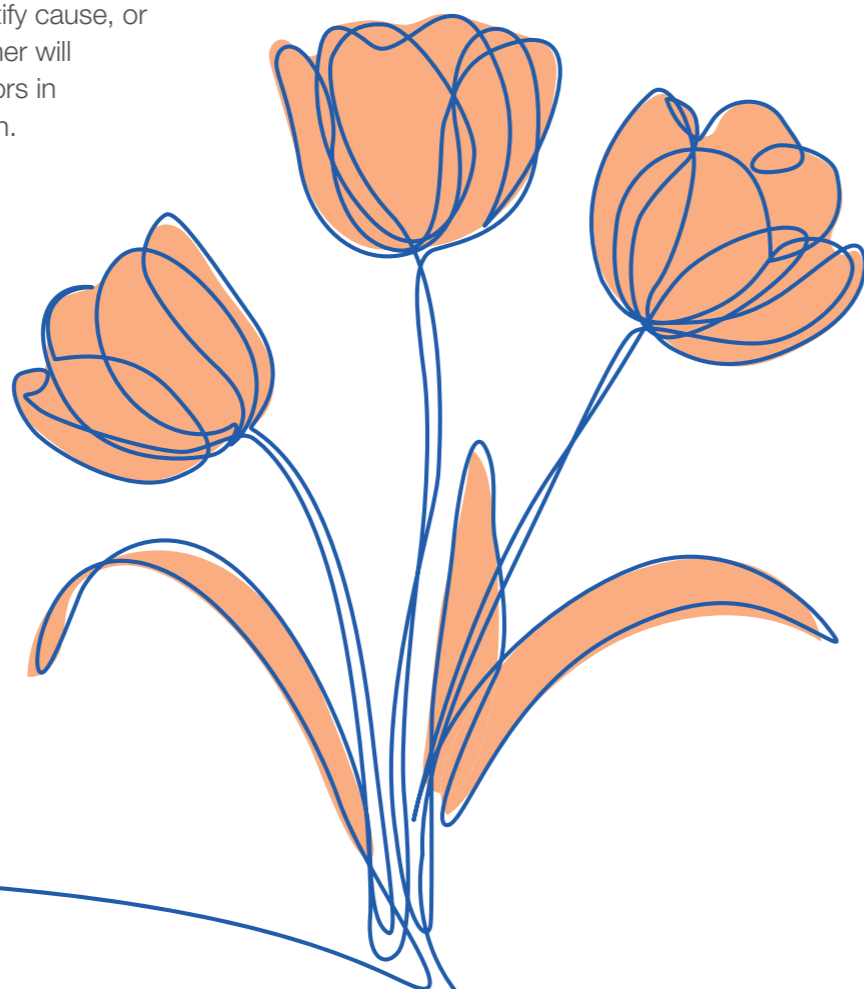


Table 5

Table 5 details the category of child deaths in North Yorkshire and York from 2017 to 2024.

	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	Total
<b>1. Deliberately inflicted injury, abuse or neglect</b> - This includes numerous physical injuries, which may be related to homicide as well as deaths from war, terrorism or other mass violence. It also includes severe neglect leading to death.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>2. Suicide or deliberate self-inflicted harm</b> - This includes any act intentionally to cause one’s own death. It will usually apply to adolescents rather than younger children.	2	1	7	2	1	1	2	16
<b>3. Trauma and other external factors</b> - This relates to unintentional physical injuries caused by external factors. It does not include any deliberately inflicted injury, abuse or neglect.	3	3	4	1	1	1	3	16
<b>4. Malignancy</b> - This includes cancer and cancer like conditions such as solid tumours, leukaemia & lymphomas, and other malignant proliferative conditions, even if the final event leading to death was infection, haemorrhage etc.	4	3	6	5	5	5	1	29
<b>5. Acute medical or surgical condition</b> - A brief sudden onset of illness which resulted in the death of a child.	6	2	2	2	3	0	1	16
<b>6. Chronic medical condition</b> – A medical condition which has lasted a long time or was recurrent and resulted in the death of child.	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	5
<b>7. Chromosomal, genetic and congenital anomalies</b> – Medical conditions resulting from anomalies in genes or chromosomes as well as a defect that is present at birth.	3	6	6	6	7	1	3	32
<b>8. Perinatal/neonatal event</b> – The death of child as a result of extreme prematurity, adverse outcomes of the birthing process, intrauterine procedure or within the first four weeks of life.	8	6	9	7	10	11	4	55
<b>9. Infection</b> – This can be any primary infection (i.e., not a complication of one of the above categories), arising after the first postnatal week, or after discharge of a preterm baby.	1	1	4	3	0	2	1	12
<b>10. Sudden unexpected or unexplained death</b> – This is where pathological diagnosis is either Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) or ‘unascertained’, at any age.	0	1	2	3	2	4	0	12
<b>Total number of child deaths reviewed by CDOP</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>192</b>

192 child deaths have been reviewed by the panel over the past 6 years. The majority of child deaths in 2023/2024 occurred as the result of a perinatal or neonatal event, with the next two most common categories being recorded as chromosomal, genetic and congenital anomalies and trauma and external factors. Of these cases, some occurred in the previous years as cases can take over six months to be brought to panel for review. This can be because the CDOP is awaiting information from agencies, for example post mortem reports or if there is an on-going police investigation, in which case the discussions may be deferred pending the result of the inquiry. It should be noted that a child’s death cannot be discussed at panel until all information is received.

# Joint Agency Response Meeting

When a child dies unexpectedly, a Joint Agency Response Meeting (JARM) will be convened within 72 hours of death. The purpose of the JARM is to enable the sharing of information, facilitate multi-agency discussions and ensure any immediate safeguarding concerns are addressed.

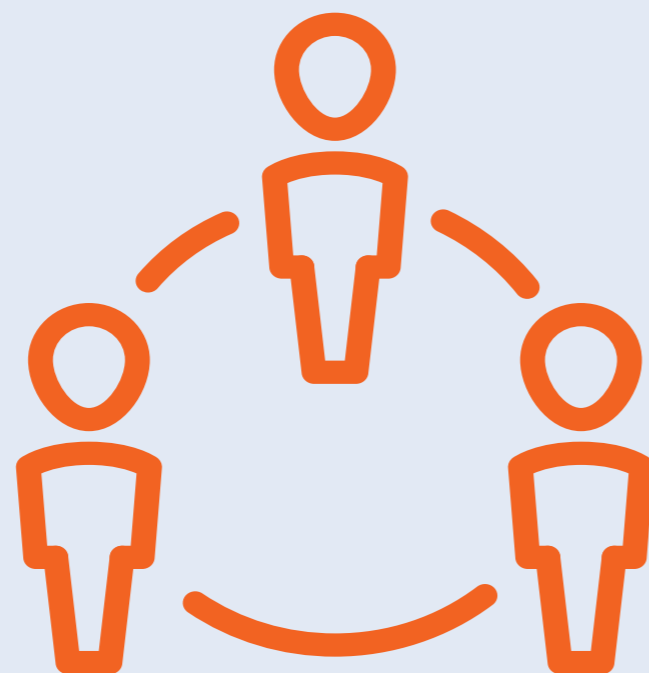
Supporting and engaging with a family who have lost a child is of the utmost importance throughout the Child Death Review process, recognising the complexities of the process and the differing emotional responses that bereavement can bring. In North Yorkshire and York the JARM will identify the most appropriate agency support for the bereaved family, defined locally as a “Key Worker.”

The Key Worker should:

- Be a reliable and readily accessible point of contact for the family after the death
- Help co-ordinate meetings between the family and professionals as required

Be able to provide information on the Child Death Review process and the course of any investigations pertaining to the child

- Liaise as required with the Coroner’s office and Police Family Liaison Officer (if involved)
- Represent the ‘voice’ of the parents at professional meetings, ensuring their questions are effectively addressed, and providing feedback to the family afterwards
- Signpost to expert bereavement support if required.



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# Child Death Review Meeting

Both expected and unexpected child deaths are required to have a Child Death Review Meeting (CDRM.) This is a multi-agency meeting where all matters relating to an individual child are discussed by professionals directly involved in the care of that child during their life. A CDRM typically occurs three months or more following the death of a child. The draft analysis form is completed within this meeting which is then presented to and confirmed when the child is reviewed by the child death overview panel.

# Child Death Overview Panel

The purpose of the panel is to consider any learning or factors that could prevent future deaths of children.

CDOP review child deaths at the end of the statutory processes and a child’s death cannot be discussed until all relevant information pertaining to the death is obtained. During 2023/2024, the panel has reviewed a total of 15 children.

## Learning and Modifiable Factors



Of the **15** child deaths reviewed in 2023/2024 Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) identified **2** instances where modifiable factors were present.

Modifiable factors are defined as ‘those, where, if actions could be taken through national or local interventions, the risk of future child deaths could be reduced’. When the panel reviews the death of a child, they identify and agree if there are any modifiable factors that may have prevented the death and what actions are required as a result. All actions are monitored through the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) governance processes via an action log.

The Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) process seeks to identify learning from all child deaths to identify common themes, ways of working and strategies to minimise the risk of future deaths. The Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) will identify modifiable factors which, had they been in place, may have prevented the death of a child.

## Training

The Designated Doctor for Child Death and the Child Death Review Officer delivered the “Child Death Review: Advanced Training for Professionals” across North Yorkshire and City of York in 2023/2024 with a range of multi-agency professionals totalling 43 delegates attending over three sessions.

The Child Death Review Officer and North Yorkshire Children’s Partnership (NYS CP) Manager regularly engage in the NCMD Webinars which are designed to provide detailed updates on the NCMD, discuss emerging issues and obtain information around the latest events in the Child Death Review sector. Information from these events is shared with North Yorkshire and City of York’s Child Death Review Partners on a regular basis.

# What has CDOP achieved over 2023/2024

Between 2017 and 2022, North Yorkshire Council (NYC) and City of York Council (COY) recorded 10 babies who had died with a reported cause of death as SUDI. In March 2021 a paper was presented to NYSCP Executive highlighting the need for a partnership response to reducing the risks of SUDI, with a particular focus on supporting families with additional vulnerabilities. This paper was in response to findings from a report published by the Safeguarding Children Practice Review Panel in July 2020 and learning arising from a number of North Yorkshire and York cases where there had been the unexpected death of an infant in families with existing safeguarding vulnerabilities.

The partnerships agreed to adopt a "Prevent and Protect Model" of SUDI Risk Minimisation. This model was subsequently named the 'Day or Night, Sleep Right' campaign and aimed to look at SUDI risk minimisation through a safeguarding lens, focusing on supporting professionals from all relevant agencies to feel competent and confident to work with families to promote safe sleep practice. In addition to an extensive program of single agency training, multi-agency training is available to practitioners. A multiagency masterclass was developed which has now had 446 views on the NYSCP YouTube channel and SUDI podcast has been listened to 76 times.

The Day or Night, Sleep Right work is ongoing with the aim of establishing safe sleep as a fundamental aspect of multiagency work. As a result of this work North Yorkshire Children and Young People's Independent Reviewing Officers have committed to ask questions to understand where babies will be sleeping to ensure this is a multi-agency conversation that takes place.

The campaign has been recognised by researchers at Durham University (Durham Infancy and Sleep Centre) as one of very few multiagency SUDI risk minimisation programmes across the Country.

The North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership on 1st April 2024 launched #Ask Me Campaign which is aimed at professionals across North Yorkshire. This campaign is encouraging conversations with new and expectant parents which encompass safe sleep and are linked to the Day and Night Sleep Right campaign.



The key messages are derived from a series of common things that are often a concern to new parents. The campaign was borne out of learning from a thematic review undertaken by NYSCP that considered three similar cases of non-accidental injury to non-mobile infants. As part of the campaign planning, the NYSCP was able to link in with parents who had tragically suffered the death of their child due to SUDI. The parents bravely shared their experiences with the partnership, explaining that they hoped their involvement might support others and their views were then incorporated into the #AskMe conversation prompts. The NYSCP would like to sincerely thank both parents for their courage and determination in sharing their insights in order to develop future safeguarding practice.

The campaign is based around the consolidation of key resources for partners that are easily accessible on one page on the NYSCP website, alongside a series of conversation prompts (#AskMe) to build confidence and raise awareness of the need to ask parents about how they are feeling around aspects of caring for their baby in those crucial first few months of life. The resources and conversation starters cover such topics as:

- Safe sleep
- Safe feeding
- ICON (Babies cry you can cope)
- Parental mental health

The campaign was launched with a social media presence throughout March and April with a post reach of over 3500 and a masterclass delivered by the two designated safeguarding nurses, highlighting learning from recent thematic reviews that have led to the production of the campaign. The session was attended by 100 partners with positive feedback of the value of the campaign received.

**“It was good to see ideas and resources to help address issues, often we hear about the issues but with little content to help address them.”**





# CDOP Priorities 2024/2025

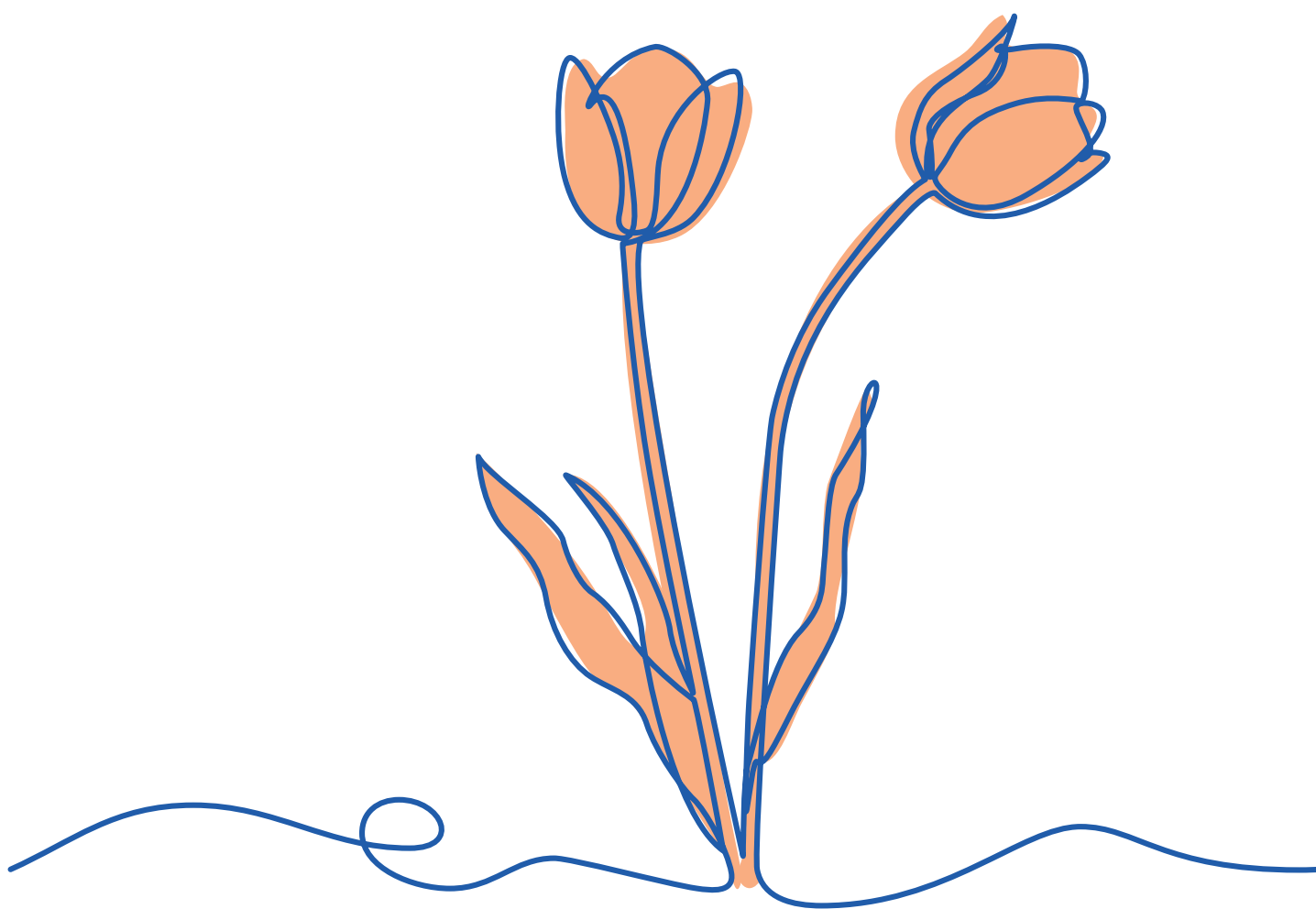
1

“Who’s Sober” The CDOP is working with COY Comms and Engagement teams to develop and promote this campaign, aimed at new parents and encouraging families to develop their own solutions when caring for new babies and young children.

2

The CDOP is working with the Comms and Engagement teams regarding a campaign for Road Safety across North Yorkshire and York and will focus on how children, young people and their families can be safe on North Yorkshire and York roads throughout the year. This campaign will engage with schools across the county to ensure there is helpful educative work done with children and young people, particularly those children transitioning from primary to secondary schools.





## Contact us

Online: [safeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/cdop](https://safeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/cdop)

By telephone: Child Death Review Officer **01609 532624** or the NYSCP **01609 535123**

By email: [cdop@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:cdop@northyorks.gov.uk)

North Yorkshire and City of York CDOP, County Hall, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 8AD

You can request this information in another language or format at

[northyorks.gov.uk/accessibility](https://northyorks.gov.uk/accessibility)

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**North Yorkshire**

Safeguarding Children Partnership

North Yorkshire Safeguarding  
Children Partnership, (NYSCP)  
Annual Report  
2023-2024

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# Statutory Safeguarding Partner Statements

As a statutory partner of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, I am pleased to present our Annual Report for the year. This report reflects the collective efforts, dedication, and collaboration of all agencies involved in safeguarding children across North Yorkshire.

The past year has seen both challenges and opportunities in our shared mission to protect the most vulnerable members of our community. The ongoing impact of national issues, local challenges, and the continued recovery from the pandemic has required us to be adaptable, innovative, and resilient in our approach to safeguarding.

Through our multi-agency work, we have strengthened our partnerships, ensuring that the voices of children and young people are heard and that their safety and welfare remain at the heart of everything we do. Our focus has been on improving early intervention, identifying risks promptly, and ensuring that children and families receive the support they need at the right time.

This report highlights the progress we have made in achieving our strategic objectives, showcases key initiatives, and provides an overview of the challenges we face moving forward. As statutory partners, we remain committed to working together to continue improving our safeguarding practices and making a real difference in the lives of children across North Yorkshire.

We would like to extend our gratitude to all those involved in safeguarding children, including frontline workers, volunteers, and our partner organizations, for their tireless efforts in ensuring the safety and well-being of children. Your dedication is the cornerstone of our success.

We look forward to continuing our work together for children in North Yorkshire.

This year has seen the NHS embedding and refining our arrangements as an Integrated Care Board (ICB). In line with statutory guidance, the Humber and North Yorkshire ICB has provided a clear directive to ensure retention of safeguarding expertise 'at place'. The Designated Professionals for North Yorkshire have continued to provide effective systems leadership to health care providers and ongoing active support to partnership working across North Yorkshire.

It is recognised that the move to ICBs offers increased opportunities to share good practice, reduce duplication and learn from the experience of other partnerships and professionals across the ICB footprint, and we are seeing the benefits. This work continues to further evolve and develop and has been strengthened and overseen by the establishment of the Humber and North Yorkshire ICB Safeguarding Committee.

There are challenges ahead as the NHS landscape continues to evolve, however, the ICB is committed to continue to build on our strong partnership relationships, dedicated to strengthen the safeguarding and children in care practice across North Yorkshire, and is proud to actively contribute to the work of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.



**Stuart Carlton**  
Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services, North Yorkshire Council



**Michelle Carrington**  
Place Nurse Director, Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board

This report represents the huge commitment and dedication of people working across the North Yorkshire Children's Safeguarding Partnership. Keeping children safe, and feeling safe, is a major challenge with complex threats both in our communities and online. North Yorkshire Police recognises that we cannot face this challenge alone, and working in partnership is more important than ever; it is only together that we can understand and respond to the needs of children and young people and address underlying issues of vulnerability.

Doing this in an effective and sustainable way is vital, but a partnership of this kind is about more than necessity. As can be seen from this report, we have built upon the principles of Working Together to Safeguard Children, past improvements, and good practice from elsewhere. This has allowed us to develop innovative and collaborative ways of working that have ensured we continue to improve. We are continuing to invest time and resources into safeguarding children, and the outcomes recognised in this report give an important indication of how effective this has been.

The professional attitude and responsibility from people working in the Partnership will make sure that we are never complacent and continuously strive to improve and better meet our responsibilities, inspired by the voices of children, young people and families.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Catherine Clarke".

**Catherine Clarke**  
Assistant Chief Constable,  
North Yorkshire Police

# Independent Scrutineer and Chair's Statement

This Annual Report covers the reporting period April 2023 to March 2024.

The role of independent scrutiny is outlined in the Children and Families Act 2017 and within the government guidance "Working Together to Safeguard Children". Scrutiny involves the provision of assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases. The decision on how to deliver scrutiny at a local level is the responsibility of the three statutory safeguarding partners (Police, ICB and Local Authority).

In North Yorkshire this has included the development of an Independent Scrutineer position to act as a constructive critical friend, promote reflection and support the development of continuous improvement. The statutory partners determined that the role in North Yorkshire should be widened to include the Chairing of the Executive Group in support of the statutory partners, and scrutiny of arrangements, at strategic level.

As a result, the role I perform within North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NYSCP) is one of Executive Chair and Independent Scrutineer. I have undertaken this role since January 2023 and this is the second Annual Report in this role, for North Yorkshire, that I have contributed to.

During 2023 the government updated the "Working Together to Safeguard Children" guidance and published the new updated document in December 2023. The new guidance requires some changes to be implemented to the partnership arrangements with publication of an updated Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangement (MASA) document by December 2024. The MASA document outlines how partnership arrangements deliver safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of all children in North Yorkshire.

Over the course of 2023/24 the NYSCP Business Team have co-ordinated a partnership review of current arrangements in North Yorkshire, and I have been involved in and overseen this workstream. The existing strong partnership arrangement in North Yorkshire has meant that much of the current way of working is already compliant with the new guidance. A key aspect of the review has looked at strengthening the role of education within the partnership. A series of development sessions have scrutinised the new guidance, identified areas to develop and strengthen partnership working to comply and this work is well underway and on track to be in place and published by December 2024.

In my role as Executive Chair, I have the opportunity to work with the three statutory partner leads who have the responsibility for strategic arrangements. The Executive meetings are held bi-monthly for 3-hourly sessions. The timing and length of these meetings ensure that the leads have the opportunity to meet regularly to provide oversight of arrangements and timely decision making. The meetings are well supported by the NYSCP Business Team. In addition to the regular Executive meeting, the statutory leads meet quarterly (as a group) to review and forward plan. The statutory leads also attend and present at the twice-yearly partnership development sessions with wider partner leads. In addition to this, I am aware that the leads have regular conversations outside of the formal structure in relation to emerging issues and concerns and where operational aspects require it. I am of the view that in North Yorkshire there exists strong and effective communication and relationships at strategic level that drive operational effectiveness and the discharging of their joint and equal duty.

This report sets out the work that has been undertaken by the partnership during the reporting period. It outlines the Being Young in North Yorkshire (BYINY) 2021-2024 strategy and the progress in relation to activity during 2023/24. The strategy was shaped by feedback from children and young people and focuses on four key themes - a safe

life, a happy life, a health life and achieving in life. The current strategy concludes in December 2024 and consultation is underway to develop the new strategy for the next 3 years. This is timely as it can also factor in any new national guidance requirements.

The report celebrates and recognises good practice across the partnership undertaken daily by Police, ICB and wider partners in delivering safeguarding of children and young people across North Yorkshire. It showcases particular examples of good work that were brought to the attention of the Executive group through the NYSCP Partnership Achievement Award pathway. I know that this is a small snapshot of some of the exceptional work delivered by practitioners, managers and organisations in North Yorkshire. For the first time, during 2023, an award was given to an exceptional young person - Tilly - who used her own experiences to develop an animated poem to be used to encourage and support other young people to come forward and report issues to the police.

In addition to identifying and recognising good work, the partnership also focuses attention on areas of practice that need to be strengthened and developed. This includes the identification of priority areas of work and plans to deliver activity, monitoring and analysing partnership information, but, also includes workstreams delivered through the work of the subgroups. An example of this being the effective work delivered through the Safeguarding Practice Review Group (SPRG) who oversee the identification of learning from specific cases and ensure that learning shapes new ways of working. A number of audits have been undertaken by the partnership over the course of the year that have highlighted recommendations that have been tracked and implemented through the subgroups. The Chairing and membership of these groups are important roles in ensuring effective and timely progress of work. This work is in addition to the demands of roles within their own organisations and I have observed strong Chairing, membership and activity undertaken throughout 2023/24. I would like to acknowledge the work of all those involved and thank them for the work delivered throughout the year.

The report outlines that this has been a year of increased demand for service support to children and families with increased contacts from Police (24%), Health Services (19%), Education Settings (19%) and

personal contact from individuals (15%). A total of 30,822 contacts (11% increase from the previous year). This has followed a pattern of increases over the last 3 years equating to a 47% increase over the three-year period. We know that increased demand for support and help is a national trend and that some of the difficulties are in relation to a legacy from the pandemic and ongoing hardship felt by the impact of the cost-of-living crisis. The report provides detail in relation to the scrutiny of information in relation to demand, but, importantly what services have done to understand why there is an increase and ensure that children and young people who need help and support receive it when they need it (examples within the report include evidence of more families accessing early help services - 11%, and, a focus on understanding why less young people are absent from school).

The report concludes with the agreed priorities for 2024/25:

- Criminal and Sexual Exploitation (including gender-based violence and discrimination)
- Strengthening the role of education in the Partnership
- Children and Young People's Emotional and Mental Health
- Online Safety

I would like to conclude by:

- Recognising the achievements within the report and the continued drive and energy I witness in personal interactions with leaders, managers and practitioners across the partnership. There continues to be a high level of service and support delivered by individuals, teams and organisations in North Yorkshire, who despite increasing demand, work tirelessly to ensure that children and young people in North Yorkshire are safe and cared for.
- Additionally and importantly acknowledging and thanking all the children and young people who took time out to provide their feedback that is used by the partnership to shape how service is delivered.
- And finally, I would like to use my section of the report to thank the NYSCP Business Team who coordinate the work of the partnership so effectively.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Heather Pearson'.

**Heather Pearson**  
Independent Scrutineer  
and Chair for NYSCP

# What is the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, (NYSCP)?

Everyone in North Yorkshire shares a commitment to and responsibility for the safeguarding of children. This document sets out the Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements for North Yorkshire, established in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018). The NYSCP consists of the three safeguarding organisations in North Yorkshire, namely North Yorkshire Council (NYC), the Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) and North Yorkshire Police (NYP).

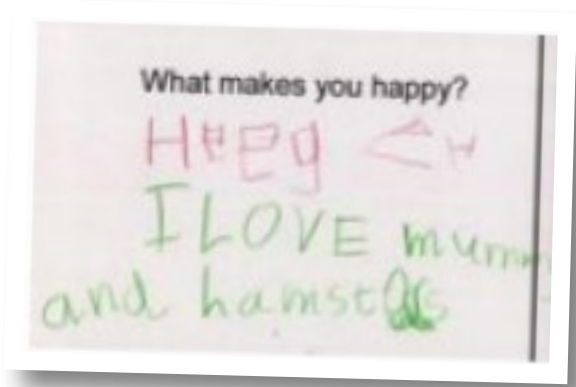
The revised Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 guidance is currently being considered by the NYSCP. A strategic focus group, chaired by our Independent Scrutineer, is reviewing the required amendments from a strategic perspective with an operational task and finish group reviewing necessary changes at practitioner and manager level. In line with the new guidance, the changes will be published in our revised Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements document in December 2024.

Further information about the current Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements in North Yorkshire is available from [our website](#).



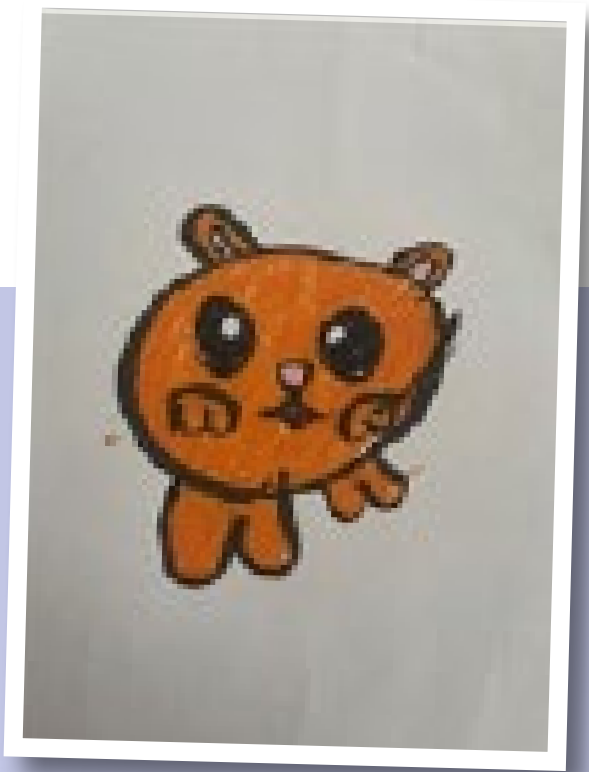




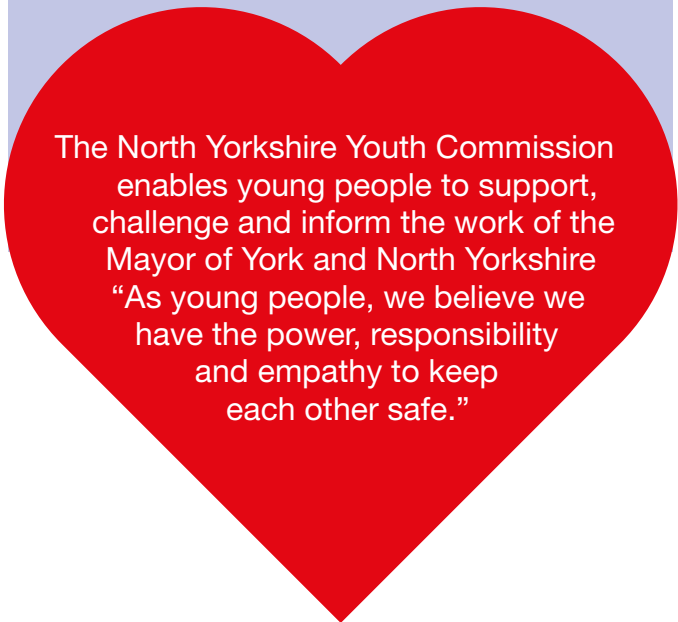


The COVID pandemic limited children's access to friends and family and disrupted their academic and social educational opportunities. As the country begins to rebuild following on from the devastation caused by global event we continue to see the impact of this on our children and young people. The word-cloud on page 6 is taken from a Healthy Schools event where children were asked "what makes your life good and happy?" Here we can see that so much of what contributes to a child's happiness, "spending time with friends," "being active" and "playing sports" was not accessible to them during national lockdowns so it is of little wonder that children continue to feel the impact of this national trauma on their emotional health and wellbeing and, while we are now coming out the other side, our young people and their families continue to live with the legacy of this.

In North Yorkshire we are privileged to serve the 151,000 children and young people aged under 25 residing in our county and despite significant challenges during the COVID pandemic, practitioners across the partnership continued to support children and their families, keeping them safe, building connections and empowering them to achieve. You will see snapshots of the success of this work throughout this annual report, through quotes from children and their carers, in the awards presented to practitioners and in the data which demonstrates how much work happens across the county on a daily basis to improve the lives of all our children in North Yorkshire.



Here in North Yorkshire we are fortunate to have active Youth Councils and Youth Voice, as well as the Growing Up in North Yorkshire survey, (completed every two years, most recently in 2022 by over 17,000 young people) and the Youth Commission, allowing us to look at our local trends and areas of concern from a young person's point of view.



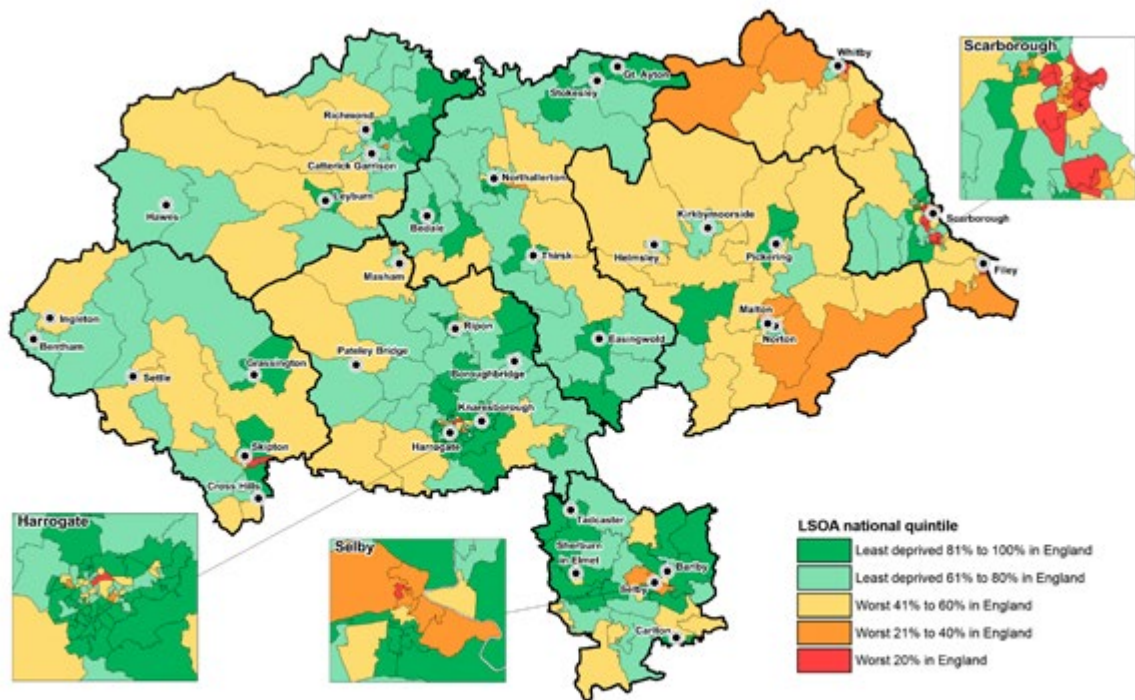
The North Yorkshire Youth Commission enables young people to support, challenge and inform the work of the Mayor of York and North Yorkshire "As young people, we believe we have the power, responsibility and empathy to keep each other safe."



"My support worker was professional and personable and very knowledgeable - she offered calm reassurance and helped me build my parenting skills. She gave Jacob someone to talk with and different outlets for his anger. Her support was invaluable to the whole family". **Chris**

North Yorkshire's main areas comprise of Craven, Hambleton, Harrogate, Richmondshire, Ryedale, Selby and Scarborough. Much of the county is rural, with moderately sized towns and an extensive coastline. Whilst North Yorkshire overall has a relatively low level of child poverty, the picture is complicated with some areas of the region experiencing significant deprivation; for example, 19.4% of children in Scarborough are classed as living in poverty which has the potential to impact on outcome for children and their families in these areas.

**Map of deprivation across North Yorkshire – LSOA by 2019 IMD Decile**



- Notes
1. Source: Indices of Deprivation 2019, MHCLG
  2. Ordnance Survey Map Data: © Crown Copyright. 100017946. (2019)
  3. Compilation & Analysis; Strategy & Performance (HAS), NYCC

The county is the largest in England at **8,000** square kilometres (3090 square miles)

© Crown Copyright and Database Rights [2024] Ordnance Survey 100017946

**615,400** people

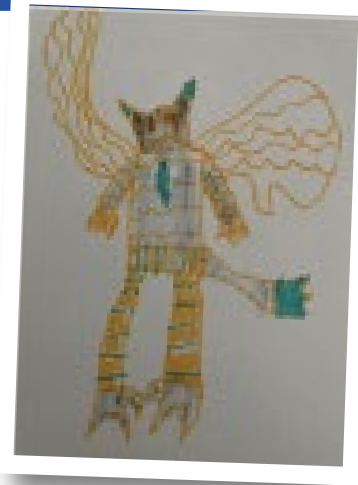
- 24.5% aged 0-24 (England average = 29.2%)
- 50.5% aged 25-64 (England average = 52.4%)
- 25% aged 65+ (England average = 18.4%)



# Being Young in North Yorkshire, (BYINY)

Being Young in North Yorkshire 2021-2024 is the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Strategy for children and young people living in North Yorkshire.

This strategy sets out our vision which is shaped by the feedback from children and young people living in North Yorkshire and sets out our four key themes for children and young people having:



## Theme One

### A safe life

- Protected from harm
- Live in safe communities
- Supported by family networks

## Theme Two

### A happy family life

- Families are empowered to be resilient
- School years are happy
- Community support networks help families thrive

## Theme Three

### A healthy life

- Promote health and wellbeing through positive choices
- Improve social, emotional and mental health
- Reduce health inequalities

## Theme Four

### Achieving in Life

- Ensure children are 'school ready'
- Raise achievement levels for all
- Create environments where children have aspirations for their future

The NYSCP recognises the importance of ensuring children, young people and their families are given the opportunity to shape the policies and practice that impacts on their lives, whether that is through access to universal services or more specialist services. This strategy comes to an end in December 2024 and the NYSCP is currently consulting with children, young people and their families to ensure the new "Being Young in North Yorkshire 2" strategy is representative of and shaped by their views regarding what our areas of focus should be for the coming three years.

The full strategy can be read [here](#).

## Children's Voice

The right of a child or young person to be heard is included in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and reinforced by national legislation and guidance. For example, in England Working Together 2023 makes it clear that one of the core principles of effective safeguarding practice is a child centred approach which aims to understand children's lived experiences and seeks their views about their lives and circumstances (Department for Education, 2023).

Listening to and capturing the voice of the child is essential for effective safeguarding practice. It helps professionals to understand children's lived experiences, hear their views about their lives and circumstances, and take effective action to support or safeguard them.

Children and young people are able to offer a different perspective to that of the adults around them and the NYSCP recognises the importance of ensuring children are at the heart of the work we do and that they are given the opportunity to inform strategies, policies and practice guidance that relates to them.

Children and young people were consulted with on the priorities of the Being Young in North Yorkshire Strategy and this recording provides a summary of these conversations and their views. [Safeguarding Partnership Consultation-20230922\\_103822-Meeting Recording.mp4 \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

## The North Yorkshire Youth Commission (NYYC)<sup>3</sup>

The NYYC gives young people across North Yorkshire a voice on issues of crime and policing and supports, challenges, and informs the work of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner. A key part of NYYC's role is to gather the views of other young people across the county through peer-to-peer research in the form of a 'Big Conversation'. This peer-led research process provides a safe environment for young people to talk to their peers about relevant issues.

At the inaugural NYYC meeting, members reviewed their priority aims to ensure they remained up-to-date and relevant to young people. The aims helped to guide the project, providing a focus for the Big Conversation. The key priorities were:

1. Mental Health and Emotional Well-being
2. Gender Violence & Safer Streets
3. Discrimination
4. Online Safety
5. Relationships with Police & Authorities
6. Drugs Gangs & County Lines

"Being in the North Yorkshire Youth Commission offers an empowering platform for our young voices to advocate for change and address issues affecting our communities. It's an amazing experience where we collaborate, learn, and drive positive impact through our collective efforts. I have enjoyed being in the North Yorkshire Youth Commission."

<sup>3</sup> NYYC-Final-Report-23-24.pdf (safeguardingchildren.co.uk)



In order to gather vital insights from those who are most affected by some of the priority topics, the NYYC put particular effort and energy into engaging with underrepresented and more marginalised groups of young people. NYYC carried out workshops and consultations with young carers, those with first-hand experience of the criminal justice system, young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, non-mainstream education settings, and young people identified as ‘at risk’, such as those taking part in the NYFRS intervention programmes. In total, we engaged in peer research with 1,704 young people across 57 consultation events.

Young people wanted police to better understand their mental health and how to avoid making situations worse. There was a belief that police can become desensitised to crisis situations and often forget that they can be intimidating to many young people.

“Important for police to know how to deal with mental health and to know how to get support for people who need it, as their job is to look after people.”

**Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy public consultation**

As part of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy public consultation involved around 500 people across survey, online events, written feedback as well as library and community group conversations about “the one thing” which would sustain/improve their health & wellbeing:

- More support/activities/places to go needed for young people (the most important thing for the youth councils but also backed up by other parts of the consultation).
- Need for more affordable, low cost or free activities for parents with young children (eg parent and baby/toddler activities), particularly where children can play safely and parents socialise.
- Access to education and employment opportunities.
- Feedback on strategy aims.
- Importance of nutrition and food.

“I think that gender violence is an issue that is not talked about enough. We need more awareness around this topic. Jokes to women like ‘go to the kitchen’ are normalised.”

“Social media has a massive impact. Pretty models make people feel bad about themselves.”

“Instagram creates overestimated beauty standards and only shows the highlights of people’s lives.”

“Come into schools and teach students more about it and explain the reasons why not to get involved. Not just ‘don’t do it’.”

# Parents and Carer's Voice

Parenting and caring for children can be one of the most rewarding jobs in the world, however, it can also be incredibly challenging, particularly when there are additional stresses and strains or unforeseen circumstances. Life means we do not know what is round the corner and there will be times throughout all our lives when we need extra help, either for ourselves or for our children. The NYSCP aims to ensure all parents and carers are aware of what support is available and that people know how to access the right support at the right time when they need it. Work is ongoing to update the Parent's and Carer's page on the NYSCP website [NYSCP \(safeguardingchildren.co.uk\)](https://www.nyscp.org.uk) with consultation taking place with an Experts by Experience parents and carers group who have been helpful in providing guidance regarding the content of this webpage.

Parents and carers across North Yorkshire are able to access North Yorkshire's Early Help Service [NYSCP \(safeguardingchildren.co.uk\)](https://www.nyscp.org.uk) via self-referral and are also able to access online parents courses on a variety of topics which has received excellent feedback from parents who have accessed this.

"Thank you for putting this course together, it will be a tremendous help in me supporting and helping my children grow and understand them a little bit more."

## Solihull Parenting<sup>4</sup>

The Solihull Parenting programme is a suite of online courses dedicated to improving emotional health and wellbeing in parents, children, teenagers, adults and grandparents.

Brene Brown, "Offering help is courageous and compassionate, but so is asking for help."

"Very informative. Made me smile thinking it's not that bad after all! I reckon I can now be a bit more understanding."

North Yorkshire Council has funded a Multi User Licence for the Solihull courses since May 2021, the on-going feedback demonstrates the positive difference the courses and modules continue to make to the parents, carers, grandparents and professionals who have accessed them.

"I thought this was incredibly interesting and helped me to understand my teenager much better."

"As head of the reunification team I have never had a more powerful resource for the team to use as we have now in our MUL with Solihull. It's a tool all families can access and supports the plans in place through statutory services'. " Shared by Dr Rebecca Johnson from an email received (Solihull, January 2024)



<sup>4</sup> inourplace by Solihull Approach – Online courses



The NYSCP is continuing to look for opportunities to consult with parents with an area of success being our [#AskMe...Have the conversation](#) campaign. The campaign was borne out of learning from a thematic review that considered three similar cases of non-accidental injury to non-mobile infants. As part of the campaign planning the NYSCP was able to link in with parents who had tragically suffered the death of their child due to Sudden and Unexplained Death (SUDI). The parents bravely shared their experiences with the partnership, explaining that they hoped their involvement might prevent the deaths of other children with their views were then incorporated into the #AskMe conversation prompts. The NYSCP would like to sincerely thank both parents for their courage and determination in sharing their insights in order to develop future safeguarding practice.

[#AskMe...Have the conversation](#) is a campaign aimed at professionals across North Yorkshire to encourage them to have conversations with new and expectant parents about how they are feeling about a number of aspects of having and caring for a baby. The key messages are derived from a series of common things that are often a concern to new parents.

The campaign is based around the consolidation of key resources for partners that are easily accessible on one page on the NYSCP website, alongside a series of conversation prompts (#AskMe's) to build confidence and raise awareness of the need to ask parents about how they are feeling around aspects of caring for their baby in those crucial first few months of life. The resources and conversation starters cover such topics as:

- Safe sleep
- Safe feeding
- ICON (Babies cry you can cope)
- Parental mental health

The campaign was launched with a social media presence throughout March and April with a post reach of over 3500 and a masterclass delivered by the two designated safeguarding nurses, highlighting learning from recent thematic reviews that have led to the production of the campaign. The session was attended by 100 partners with positive feedback of the value of the campaign received.





# The NYSCP Partnership Achievement Awards

The North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Awards celebrates the multi-agency work between the Council, Police, NHS and wider partners in safeguarding vulnerable children and their families.

The recipients of this year's awards have all demonstrated their passion and determination to keep children and young people at the heart of the work they do in what can be exceptionally challenging circumstances. Strategic leads would like to take this opportunity to say a heartfelt "thank you" to not only the award winners but also all other practitioners who work, day in day out to keep children safe and to help them to achieve their full potential.

The Partnership Achievement Awards are given to individuals or groups working or volunteering with children and young people. Awards have been presented to the following professionals and teams over 2023/2024:

**Emergency Duty Team** at North Yorkshire Council were recognised for identifying opportunities to improve the standards of practice and improve integration between day and night services.



**Laura Hadgett, Clinical Psychologist** in Scarborough who worked with a young person to build trust and shared information in a collaborative and thoughtful way and ensured the young person was safe and well-cared for.



**Sophie Buch, National Referral Mechanism Co-ordinator** for the setup, implementation and running of the Home office pilot across North Yorkshire and City of York.



**Roboodles Wraparound Club at Roeclyffe Primary School** were nominated by a parent for ensuring the club is caring, safe and nurturing and sought the expertise of a Nutritionist to support in developing a healthy menu.



**Mary Devanney, Children and Families Worker** who shows such dedication and commitment to the families she works with in Selby.



**Karen Rawlinson, Family Network Co-ordinator** in Harrogate for her outstanding work in supporting and encouraging young people to be empowered who were deemed at risk of criminal exploitation.



**Jess Fanning, Children and Families Worker** from Scarborough who recognised a critically unwell child and got them the immediate medical care required and supported the family through this period.



Katie Hoggarth, Children and Young People's Worker at SELFA who has gone above and beyond whilst working with complex issues and has worked in partnership with health and social care colleagues to ensure a positive outcome for the young people involved.



**Children in Care Team from Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust** who have worked with multi-agency partners to improve performance around statutory health assessments and worked collaboratively with Local Authority colleagues to establish a new system for bespoke Initial Health Assessment provision for Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers.



**Helen Williams, CEO for Moorlands Learning Trust** who goes beyond her role to contribute and make a substantial difference to the wider education system across the County who continues to be an ambassador for a collaborative education system within North Yorkshire.



**Bethany Stanley from Aiskew Church of England Primary School, Val Clayden from Bedale High School and Clare Walmsley from Outwood Academy Ripon** who were all involved in a partnership learning themed audit looking at suspensions and exclusions from school. It was evident they all aim to achieve the best outcome for the children they work with, demonstrate relationship based approaches and put in place restorative work when needed. It was felt in all of the cases looked at involving these schools that suspension was the last resort used.



## Special Recognition Awards

The inaugural Life Time Achievement award (also known as the Kelaine Award!) was this year presented to **Karen Hedgley** and **Elaine Wyllie** for their tireless work and dedication to the safeguarding of children and young people. Karen and Elaine spent their careers working in the NHS and latterly were a key part of the ICB representation on the NYSCP Executive Board. Karen and Elaine made the decision to retire in April 2024 and while they will be sadly missed by the partnership, we would like to express our sincere gratitude for all the work they have done over the years and to wish them both joy and happiness for the future.



The NYSCP have, for the first time this year, presented an award to one of our outstanding young people. Tilly has produced an animated poem in conjunction with North Yorkshire Police that she would like to be used as a training aid to encourage officers to become detectives. The video demonstrates the courage Tilly had when she took the first step in reporting a serious sexual assault that she experienced during the COVID pandemic. The video, alongside an interview with Tilly and her family was played on BBC Look North. The NYSCP felt it important to recognise Tilly's bravery in the face of adversity and her drive and determination to help other young people who may feel worried about coming forward to report a crime.

The NYSCP is looking for nominations for future achievement awards. More information about how you can nominate individuals, teams or services can be found at [www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/partnership-award](http://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/partnership-award).



## Theme One

# A safe life

# 1

- Protected from harm
- Live in safe communities
- Supported by family networks

The MAST (Multi-Agency Screening Team) received a total of 30,822 of contacts over 2023/24, an increase of 11% on the previous year.

We saw an increase in contacts from all 4 major contact sources:

- Police (+24%, 2682 additional contacts)
- Health services (+19%, 973 additional contacts)
- Schools (+19%, 598 additional contacts)
- Individuals (+15%, 299 additional contacts)

We have seen consistent year on year growth in the overall number of contacts received over the last 3 years, rising from 20,931 contacts in 2020/21 to 30,822 in 2023/24. This represents a 47% increase in reports of safeguarding concerns about children in this period.

More families have received support from our Early Help services with an 11% increase in new cases this year (4,512).

**This report has highlighted the continued difficulties being experienced by children and their families across the country and county in relation to the legacy of the COVID pandemic and the impact of the cost of living crisis. All services are seeing an increase in demand as families previously not known to services begin to feel the effects of the challenges being experienced nationally. The NYSCP**

**have, over the last year, raised the profile of the support available to families as is seen through the increase of support being provided by early help services across the county.**

The re-referral rate has steadily climbed throughout 2023/24 and stood at 19.7% for the full year. This is 3% higher than in 2022/23, although is still statistically significantly lower than the national rate (21.5%).

We saw an increase in the number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan this year, rising to 419 at the end of 2023/24, an increase of 44 (+12%) compared to last year.

Only 4% of new Child Protection Plans were within a year of a previous Child Protection Plan.

The rate of repeat referrals across 2022/23 was 17.0%, which remains statistically significantly lower than the national average of 22.4%.

**Our relationship based practice model<sup>5</sup> is embedded across our children and family workforce and our data tells us more families are needing help and those that have previously required help need more now than in previous years. Our data also shows that the work our social workers do improves the lives of children. Our repeat referrals rates are statistically significantly lower than the national average demonstrating that we provide the right service at the right time by the right person.**

<sup>5</sup> NYSCP (safeguardingchildren.co.uk)





60% of pupils who go online say they know how to keep themselves safe on the Internet<sup>6</sup>. Nonetheless, 21% say they have friends online that they don't know in "real life".

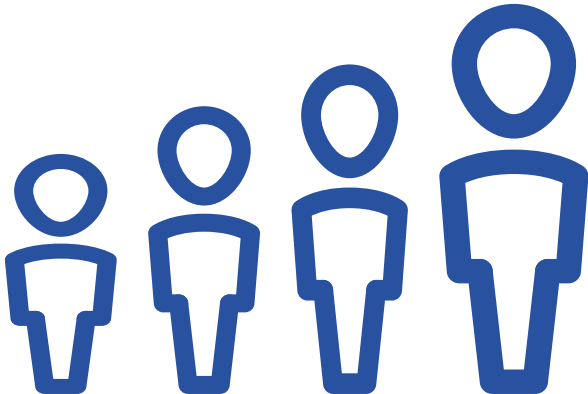
21% of year six pupils told us that they had been bullied at or near school in the last 12 months.

**The NYSCP recognises that children's online and offline worlds are no longer separate in the way it was for previous generations and this means the support that is provided to them in order to help keep them safe needs to be different too. Work is ongoing across the partnership to provide children with the tools to access their online lives in as safe a way as possible.**

The number of children in care at the end of 2023/24 was 500, which is higher than the same period last year (454) but recognises that Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) cared for by the Local Authority has risen.

**The number of UASC children has more than doubled over the last two years totalling 53 at the end of 2023/24 and is likely to increase further. This increase reflects the national picture and the local authorities.**

**The Minority Inclusion Support Team (MIST) and Children and Families Intervention Team (FIT) provide support to UASC young people, helping them settle into their accommodation, supporting young people to attend education and other social activities.**



<sup>6</sup> NYork2022summary (healthyschoolsnorthyorks.org)

## Theme Two

# A happy family life

# 2

- Families are empowered to be resilient
- School years are happy
- Community support networks help families thrive

The [Growing up in North Yorkshire Survey](#) was undertaken to seek a detailed understanding of what daily life is like for children across the age ranges within North Yorkshire.

### We have feedback from children about what things make them happy:



Friends



Family



Pets



Technology



School



Nature and countryside



Hobbies



Activities



Games



Books



Teachers

The SEMH i-Thrive model identified 80% of North Yorkshire's young people are thriving most of the time.

**Our Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) system is multi-agency with a shared language and co-owned vision. We have SEMH Teams working with primary schools across the county to provide training, advice and support to children. The work has focused on preventing exclusions, increasing attendance and has co-produced guidance materials with parents and carers.**



### Attachment and trauma aware schools project

The Virtual School (for Children in Care) has employed an educational psychologist to train schools in attachment and trauma, recognising the importance of adverse childhood experiences on the entire life course.

They rolled out the 'Attachment Aware Schools Project: Developing Trauma Responsive Practice.'

The aim is to work with schools to embed trauma-informed best practice at an individual and system level when working with vulnerable pupils.

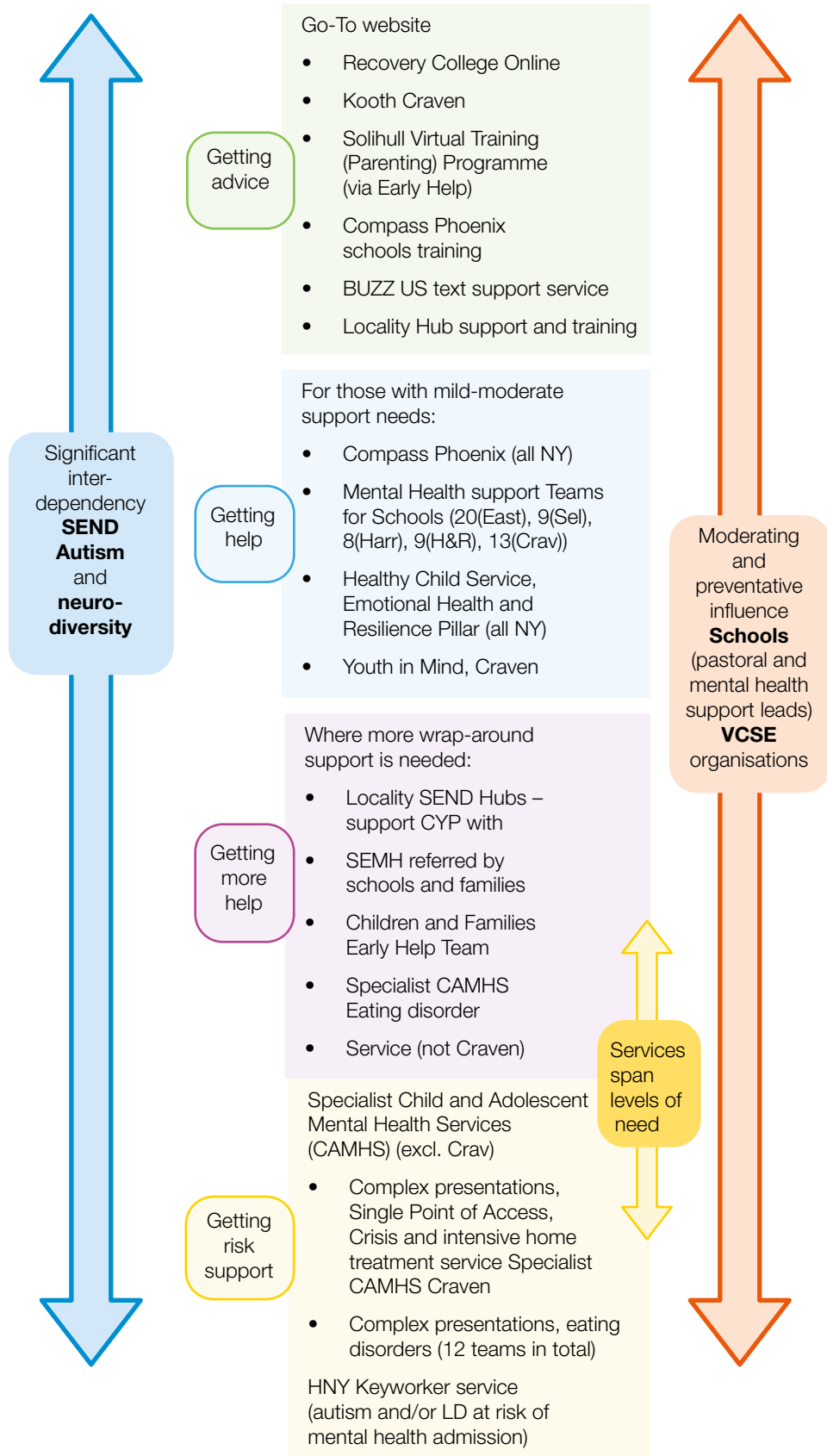
The project is available to primary, secondary and special schools where at least one Looked After Child is on the school roll. Currently we have 112 schools involved across North Yorkshire.



- 41% of pupils reported that they think their school deals with bullying well.
- 58% of pupils responded that they found school lessons about keeping safe online 'quite' or 'very' useful.
- 57% of pupils responded that they are asked for their opinions about what they learn in school; 41% said their opinions make a difference.
- 45% of pupils found their lessons about emotional health and wellbeing 'quite' or 'very' useful.
- Two-year-old funding take up that supports families on the lowest incomes remains higher than the national average of 74% in North Yorkshire with 97.8% in 2023.

The partnership is working towards embedding trauma informed practice approaches to working with children, young people and their families using the arc framework<sup>7</sup> with training being rolled out from senior manager level to practitioners and business support staff.

**Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) is an approach to care and service provision based on an awareness of the high prevalence of trauma in the lives of people accessing mental health services, the effects of trauma experiences, and the potential for trauma or re-traumatization to occur in the context of care. (Harris and Fallot, 2013)\***



The diagram above shows what support is available for children and young people across the partnership to support their mental and emotional health and wellbeing.

7 What is ARC? - ARC Framework

## Theme Three

# A healthy life

# 3

- Promote health and wellbeing through positive choices
- Improve social, emotional and mental health
- Reduce health inequalities



The journey towards a healthy life begins at conception with the health of the mother having a significant impact on the healthy growth and development of the baby. In North Yorkshire 78% of antenatal contacts take place within the recommended 10 weeks which is higher than the regional rate of 72%. Once born new parents have access to five mandated contacts between baby's birth and 2.5 years. Parents also have access to the HDFT Children's Health Services App, the Ask the Midwife service and the DadPad App.

- Over the year, there has been 28,309 attendances at Accident & Emergency Departments for children as a result of injury. This has been 6% higher than the previous year, however, may be influenced by an increasing confidence in attendance following the post COVID recovery.
- However, fewer young people have required inpatient admission as a result of injury, with 966 admissions, 17% fewer than in 21/22.
- Similarly, fewer children have required admission as a result of substance misuse. For 22/23 there were 148 admission which was 93 fewer than 2021/22.
- 69% of young people aged 10/11 responded that they had found school lessons about healthy eating 'quite' or 'very' useful'.
- 85% of 10–11 year-olds said they felt they knew enough about how their body changes as they get older.
- Face to face attendance at Yor-Sexual-Health clinics have seen a reduction this year, however there has been an increased online support offer making it easier for young people to access at any day/time [www.yorsexualhealth.org.uk](http://www.yorsexualhealth.org.uk).

- Year eight and year 10 pupils who do five or more hours of physical activity in a typical week in school (9% in 2020 vs. 15% in 2022) or out of school (35% in 2020 vs. 45% in 2022) has increased.
- There has been an increase in children visiting a dentist with 53% of children in 2022 having been to a dentist in the last year compared to 42% in 2020.

For older children there are several programmes and services in place across the county to support children's physical wellbeing such as flexibly commissioned dental practices, oral health training for professionals and support around healthy eating.

**The Healthy Schools Award Programme started in September 2019 with an aim to encourage healthy behaviours within schools. To date, 294 North Yorkshire schools have signed up (81% of schools in the county). 106 have so far achieved an award.**

The HDFT Children's Health Services App was developed by and for the North Yorkshire 0-19 Healthy Child Team as a useful resource for staff, parents and families. It covers multiple key topics, including infant feeding, advice on being a dad, etc.

The Facebook page is used to promote the app, drop-in clinics and campaigns. Over 28 days, the site can achieve a reach of over 8,000.



### **Ask a Midwife**

The award-winning Ask a Midwife service is delivered through the social media platforms Facebook and Instagram and via email. It is staffed by experienced midwives answering frequently asked questions as well as responding to private message queries.

It facilitates questions and cascades important public health advice. In 2022, the service answered 8,500 queries with 94% answered immediately. It made 508 referrals.

### **DadPad App**

The DadPad App is an easy-to-use, free, downloadable resource for new dads and dads-to-be, filled with useful information and details on local support groups and service providers. It aims to provide new fathers with guidance on how to develop the mindset, confidence and practical skills needed to meet their babies' physical and emotional needs.

The app also provides dads with guidance on how to support and seek help for their partners and themselves as they adjust to their new roles, and cope with the physical and emotional strains that this can place on individuals and relationships.

[DadPad | About Us | Who We Are and What We Do \(thedadpad.co.uk\)](#)



## Theme Four

# Achieving in Life

# 4

- Ensure children are 'school ready'
- Raise achievement levels for all
- Create environments where children have aspirations for their future

We know that “achieving” looks different for each child and is dependent on their age and cognitive development. We have 17,469 2-4 year olds in North Yorkshire with 88% achieving the expected level of development when assessed between the ages of 2-21/2. Children are able to access government funded nursery places from the age of 2 with take up in North Yorkshire being above the national average.

For children with Special Educational Needs they have better development in North Yorkshire than their national peers, with 20% achieving expected levels at age 4-5 years.



Dingley's Promise aims to increase the early identification of children in Early Years with SEN through training Early Years Practitioners.

It is a Comic Relief Early Years Inclusion project.

All courses are online with a mixture of workbook, video and activities to be completed at the Practitioner's own pace. Individuals are certified and settings/childminders can receive the kitemark at different levels on completion.

There are currently 394 practitioners signed up, which represents 8% of North Yorkshire's early years workforce. 95% of those who gave feedback said they would do something different following completion of the training.

*"This has been one of the best courses I have undertaken. The fact that it can be done at your own pace is great. The content is so thorough, and suggested strategies invaluable. I found all the links to YouTube, and further reading and information incredibly helpful in better understanding this area."*





The most recent school census data from January 2023 recorded that there were 82,866 children attending a school in North Yorkshire and at the end of the following year in March 2024, 95.1% of 16 and 17 year olds were in education, employment or training. On the 29th February 2024, the Ofsted data recorded that 87% of North Yorkshire primary schools are graded as Good or Outstanding compared to 91% nationally. 76% of secondary schools in North Yorkshire are Good or Outstanding with 83% being the national average.

- We know during the COVID lockdown that there was an increase in children Electively Home Educated (EHE), as part of the post lockdown recovery we have continued to see a number of children EHE. At the end of the 2023/24 Spring term there were 1,130 children in EHE, which is an increase of 227 (25%) on the previous year.
- We also know that for some young people, returning to school has been challenging. Over the Autumn and Spring terms of the 2023/24 academic year 2,073 children were excluded from secondary schools for a total of 5,850 fixed term suspensions and 56 children were permanently excluded from their school. Fixed term suspensions of children in primary schools has also increased.
- 60% of pupils said they are happy being at school 'most of the time' since COVID and lockdown, while 13% said they aren't happy.
- 86% of pupils think it is important to go to school regularly.
- 33% of boys and 43% of girls in Year 10 said they want to continue in full-time education at the end of their course.

- 66% of Year 10 pupils did homework on the evening before the survey. 20% reported they did more than an hour.
- Continued development of our innovative offer to care leavers in North Yorkshire to ensure they have someone to turn to if they need any help or advice or simply to tell someone what they have achieved at any age, even when they are no longer receiving regular support. Over 22/23, we received over 100 requests for this service both individuals asking for advice and sharing achievements throughout the year.

**Understanding the story behind the data for children in school is important as is understanding what support is being provided across the partnership. This report now contains a section detailing the work underway with schools across the partnership (see page 31 for more information.)**

# The NYSCP Sub-Groups

## Child Safeguarding Practice Review Group, (SPRG)

North Yorkshire Children's Services are duty-bound to notify the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and by extension the Department for Education and OFSTED, if it knows or suspects a child has died or been seriously harmed and abuse or neglect is known or suspected.

The SPRG is a multi-agency group of strategic leads from statutory and non-statutory agencies, including education, chaired by the Designated Doctor for Safeguarding and Children in Care. The group meets responsively when a referral is made to the SPRG and meets routinely four times per year to ensure there is progress against the recommendations and learning gathered from reviews.

## SPRG Data 2023/2024

Number of notifications made to the CSPRP in 2023/24	2
Number of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPR) awaiting publication (due to ongoing Police investigations)	3
Number of Serious Case Reviews (SCR) Outstanding from the Local Safeguarding Children Board (due to ongoing investigations)	1
Number of cases notified to North Yorkshire Safeguarding Practice Review Group (SPRG) in 2023/2024 by partners for consideration	4
Of the cases notified to SPRG 2023/2024 for consideration, which have been reviewed locally for learning	4



## Thematic Review

During the period between April and December 2022 the Partnership undertook Rapid Reviews for three separate children where there was found to be non-accidental injuries to non-mobile babies. The NYSCP Executive recognised that three similar incidents within a short time period was unusual for the Partnership and as such it was felt appropriate to commission a thematic review in order to understand the commonalities and identify learning for safeguarding practice development. The review focussed on how health professionals explore with parents the impact of a newborn on their mental health, the coordination of the post-natal support on infant feeding, how they understood any potential vulnerabilities in their family and supported them with those and how messages of infant crying through ICON were shared with families and how they were supported to cope with this. Similarly, the partnership were keen to identify areas of good practice within these three cases and how we can support practitioners to adopt these more widely. The four key areas identified from the review were focused on:

- Developing professional skills
- Management of the ‘unsettled infant’
- Pathways to support parents with mental health difficulties
- Sharing good practice

The review was then shared with the National Panel and the action plan overseen by the NYSCP Practice Development and Learning Subgroup. An executive summary of the review can be viewed on our [website](#).

## Practitioner Event

The NYSCP have also undertaken some focussed practitioner events to our multi-agency learning. This year, following an unexpected death of a 4 month old baby who had been open to services at the time of their very sad death, a practitioner learning event was held with frontline practitioners and their managers to explore the issue of how safe sleep messages are given to parents. The event provided a reflective space for practitioners to review their practice collectively and consider how NYSCP could continue to develop practice in this area. The learning event received some positive feedback from attendees with regards to how we learn together from such tragic events, recognise good practice and work collaboratively to develop future practice.

**“The event has been useful and supportive. I was worried /nervous due to the sadness around the situation and the fact the family and baby were doing so well and baby was so happy and smiley. I agree that we worked well as a multiagency and this is a very sad case.”**

**“The event has been useful in helping to reflect on the case, bringing all the involved practitioners together to share their experiences and learning. We feel that we now have some reassurance that there was evidence of good practice from services.”**

The learning from this event supported the development of our recent #AskMe campaign which is detailed in this report. The SPRG have also agreed to include practitioner events in the terms of reference for the group to further develop this area of practice in line with the priority regarding working in a trauma informed way which is also described further below in the report.

## Practice Development Subgroup

This group seeks to support the effective safeguarding and welfare of children and young people across North Yorkshire by developing safeguarding children practice in line with National and the current NYSCP business plan priorities.

### Achievements 2023/24

- Progressed work regarding the Home Environment Assessment Tool<sup>8</sup> (training on the tool has been delivered across the partnership via a masterclass. The tool is available online at [www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/forms-and-tools/](http://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/forms-and-tools/))
- Raised awareness of the whole family approach to support those who experience and perpetrate domestic abuse.
- Developed joint protocol with City of York regarding children missing from home and care.
- Developed practice guidance for safeguarding unborn babies.
- Worked with North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adult's Board to develop a Preparing for Adulthood pathway.
- Commissioned the NSPCC to develop North Yorkshire's approach to Harmful Sexual Behaviour.

## Learning Improvement Subgroup

The NYSCP Learning and Improvement Subgroup seeks to identify, report and act upon any appropriate examples of local, regional and national learning through the Learning and Improvement Framework. An overview of learning from our audits over this period can be [found here NYSCP Masterclass June 2023 Learning from Audits - YouTube](#).

### Achievements in 2023/2024

- Undertaken multi-agency audits
- Considered multi-agency data
- Shared learning from reviews
- Delivered Learning Events (available to access at [NYSCP - YouTube](#))

## Practice and Learning Subgroup

In September 2023, after a period of consultation with partners, the NYSCP made the decision to make a change to the sub-group structure of the partnership. The consultation identified the opportunity for efficiencies to be gained by merging the Learning Improvement and Practice and Learning sub-groups to become the Practice and Learning Sub-Group. This group is the “engine room” of the partnership and has seen partners across police, health, the local authority, education and the voluntary sector come together on a six weekly basis to drive forward the partnership's priorities through the Being Young in North Yorkshire Strategy and embed learning from reviews across the workforce. The first meeting took place in April 2024 and future annual reports will provide the detail of the work undertaken by the subgroup.

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<sup>8</sup> NYSCP (safeguardingchildren.co.uk)



# Multi-agency Learning Themed Audits

When partner agencies and individual professionals engage in case auditing, it helps understand:

- The effectiveness of front-line practice in protecting children and young people;
- How well the lessons of Case Reviews and other reviews of practice have been learnt; and
- What the impact of locally delivered training has been.

Importantly, it allows us to identify good practice and ask questions about whether things could be done differently to improve the safeguarding system.

The partnership undertake three learning themed audits per year. Learning from each audit is shared across the partnership via various networks and masterclass training sessions.

During 2023/2024, we have undertaken three Learning Themed Audits covering:

1. Multi-Agency Responses to Domestic Abuse
2. Multi-Agency Responses to Children Excluded/Suspended from School
3. Multi-Agency Responses to Unborn Babies

## Findings from the Domestic Abuse Audit

(Our 7 point briefing is available here: [91252-7-Point-Briefing-Domestic-Abuse.pdf \(safeguardingchildren.co.uk\)](https://safeguardingchildren.co.uk/91252-7-Point-Briefing-Domestic-Abuse.pdf))

We know that children and young people are often the unheard victims of domestic abuse. Many abusers directly target children through emotional abuse, violence, or sexual abuse. However, even where children are not directly or deliberately targeted, living in families where abuse is happening can have a huge impact on children's relationships with others and on their behaviour, with some becoming aggressive and others withdrawn. The NYSCP learning themed

audit identified a number of areas of good practice such as practitioners taking a whole family approach when seeking to understand the impact domestic abuse and partner support such as IDAS.

IDAS<sup>9</sup> is a commissioned service in North Yorkshire that offers support to children and their families who have experienced domestic abuse. As well as supporting children and young people who live in our refuges, IDAS support young people and children across North Yorkshire via the Respect Young People's Programme and through the DAWFA (Domestic Abuse Whole Family Approach). Both programmes help the whole family including those families where young people are being abusive to their parents or siblings. Through the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) and Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) service IDAS can support young people aged 14+ in their own right and in some areas are able to provide services that specifically support younger people including the innovative Respect and Whole Family Programmes which are delivered across North Yorkshire.

IDAS community teams across North Yorkshire can also support young people under the age of 16 years who have been abused or sexually assaulted in their relationship.

There were a number of areas for development identified from the audit, such as ensuring appropriate information sharing takes place between professionals and further developing practitioners' skills in working in a professionally curious way. As a result of the audit the information sharing agreement between agencies has been updated, as has the professional curiosity practice guidance [NYSCP \(safeguardingchildren.co.uk\)](https://safeguardingchildren.co.uk/nyscp-practice-model) which now reflects the NYSCP practice model of relational based working.

<sup>9</sup> Copy of IDAS Impact Report 2022 (29.7 x 21 cm)

## Findings from the Exclusions Audit

The NYSCP regularly monitors the data around school exclusions and noted an increase in the number of fixed term exclusions within both primary and secondary schools, thus commissioned an audit to understand the impact of the multi-agency working in this area.

The children subject to the audit had all been impacted by COVID 19. For many children, they could not access education in school for a large part of the year. When children returned to the classroom, restrictions in place meant week by week children were unsure whether they would be attending school in person or not and children were frequently sent home due to Covid outbreaks in their school population. The Covid 19 pandemic is behind us, however, the legacy of this disrupted access to education remains.

Having schools attend the audit meetings was invaluable as they were able to provide insights into a variety of approaches used to support their most vulnerable pupils. It was clear throughout the process that each school went over and above to keep children in school and that exclusion/suspension was used only as a final course of action when there were safety concerns for the child or their peers.

**The audit identified a number of recommendations that will be managed through the newly formed Practice and Learning Sub-Group, the outcome of which will be reported on in the NYSCP annual report 2024/2025.**

## Findings from the Unborn Baby Audit

The purpose of this report is to provide the NYSCP with assurance as to the effectiveness of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements regarding unborn babies.

The National Child Safeguarding Review Panel commented in their annual report 2022 – 23<sup>10</sup> that: “Babies under the age of 12 months old remain the single largest age group within rapid reviews (36%) and in their paper, “Pre-Birth Assessment and Infant Removal at Birth”<sup>11</sup> the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory in

2019 stated, “without effective, timely assessment and support during pregnancy, intervention at birth is likely to be poorly planned and can result in instability for the new baby and huge distress for family members.”

The NYSCP has developed practice guidance for multi-agency practitioners working with pregnant women and their partners, [NYSCP \(safeguardingchildren.co.uk.\)](https://safeguardingchildren.co.uk/) The audit group has sought to explore how potential safeguarding concerns are identified and assessed prior to birth, how male care givers have been involved in the assessment and planning and how, as a multi-agency, partners have contributed to the safety and wellbeing of unborn children across North Yorkshire.

There was evidence of good practice across a number of areas such as early recognition of safeguarding concerns and information sharing between agencies. With regard to areas of development it was found that further work was required regarding understanding parents’ experiences of being parented and how this may impact on their own parenting styles and further work was agreed on gaining the voice of non-verbal children to ensure their “voice” is represented in multi-agency planning.

## Audit Priorities for 2024-2025

The NYSCP have agreed that in 2024 – 2025 learning themed audits will consider:

- Children Missing from Home and Care
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour
- Parental Substance Use and Mental Health

The first two topics have previously been audited by the NYSCP in 2020 and it has been agreed that a benchmarking exercise would now be useful to understand how practice has developed in order to demonstrate improved outcomes for children and young people in this area. Parental Substance Misuse and Mental Health is a new topic for the partnership and it was felt important to consider this area in light of findings from local rapid reviews and child deaths where parental substance use and mental health have been present.

<sup>10</sup> The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel Annual Report 2022-23 (publishing.service.gov.uk)

<sup>11</sup> Pre-birth assessment and infant removal at birth: experiences and challenges - Nuffield Family Justice Observatory (nuffieldfjo.org.uk)

# Working with Education

The NYSCP Executive recognise the importance of working alongside education colleagues in order to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people. In 2022/2023 the NYSCP made it a priority to strengthen the relationships already established at strategic level.



## School Safeguarding Audit

Between December 2022 and March 2023, the NYSCP completed its mandatory bi-annual audit of the safeguarding arrangements across all schools in North Yorkshire (including maintained, academies, free and independent). The audit supports the NYSCP to fulfil its statutory functions of assessing the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements within schools as well as enabling governing Boards, Trustee(s) and Proprietor(s) a tool to test, challenge and be assured that the arrangements they have in place are in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Safeguard Children.



Part of the audit this year also included undertaking a series of safeguarding audit panel sessions where NYSCP representatives from Police, Health and the Local Authority met with a representative sample of 3% of our schools to explore their safeguarding audit responses and action plans. The panel sessions were a useful way of identifying good practice in safeguarding within our schools and in helping the NYSCP's understanding of how schools were approaching some of the challenges in this area. The panel sessions provided a useful collaborative and engaging space to have conversations about safeguarding practice, governance and assurance.

The results of the Safeguarding Schools Audit were presented to the NYSCP Executive and the Practice and Learning Subgroup, as well as being presented to the Designed Safeguarding Lead Network. The audit resulted in the identification of 12 recommendations that will form an action plan to be overseen by the Practice and Learning Subgroup.

## Designated Safeguarding Leads Conference

In October 2023, the NYSCP delivered a conference for Designed Safeguarding Leads across North Yorkshire which was attended by over 157 delegates from schools across North Yorkshire. The day began with a presentation from Dr Gill Kelly, Consultant in Public Health regarding supporting children with adverse childhood experiences and mental fragility and ended with a session presented by Professor Simon Hackett regarding how to identify, prevent and support children who have experience of harmful sexual behaviours. Alongside this, a series of workshops were delivered on:

- Child Protection Conferences through the lens of relational based practice
- CAMHS and children's mental health
- The role of DSLs in schools
- Developments in multi-agency child exploitation
- Young people, gaming and gambling
- Thresholds and Early Help

Alongside keynote speakers and workshops, the conference provided DSLs with the opportunity to network with colleagues via a “marketplace” with eighteen stallholders from a broad range of partners such as Inspire Youth<sup>12</sup>, JustB<sup>13</sup>, The Children’s Society<sup>14</sup> and The Humber and North Yorkshire Cyber Crime Unit<sup>15</sup>

Attendees fed back they felt the day had exceeded their expectations and valued the opportunity to learn new developments in the world of safeguarding while also enhancing their understanding of the role of the NYSCP. The NYSCP Executive have agreed to making the conference an annual event which this year will have a focus on children’s online safety as we consider the developments in artificial intelligence in the world of safeguarding children.

## Working Together with Education Focus Group

In September 2023 an operational “Working Together with Education” focus group was established. This group is chaired by the Head of Virtual School from the Children and Young People’s Service and has brought together school staff from a range of multi-agency academy trusts, independent and maintained schools from early years, primary and secondary schools. The group facilitates the collaboration of the partnership and education, serving to ensure operational education staff have a voice in the development of strategies and practice guidance.

## DSL Network and Early Years

Alongside delivering masterclasses to a range of professionals the NYSCP offer specific sessions to DSLs and Early Years providers throughout the year. These sessions are an opportunity for education staff to be appraised of updates within the partnership and a space where learning from national and local reviews is shared.

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12 [Youth Support Harrogate & District | Inspire Youth](#)

13 [Just B](#)

14 [The Children's Society | UK children's charity \(childrenssociety.org.uk\)](#)

15 [Regional Organised Crime Units \(rocu.police.uk\)](#)

## SPOTLIGHT:

### SELFA and Brathay Pathfinders Collaboration

There are several projects underway across the partnership with a view to supporting children’s education. One of those projects is the SELFA and Brathay Pathfinders Collaboration which is detailed below:

SELFA and Brathay embarked on a collaborative effort to address the needs of children and young people aged 11-15 in the Airedale, Wharfedale, and Craven areas experiencing school anxiety, refusal, or exclusion. The jointly developed program aimed to support these individuals in overcoming their challenges and successfully reintegrating into mainstream education. This report outlines the key components of the project, its implementation, and its impact.

As a result of delivering the Pathfinder programme:

- We have successfully supported families to submit Education Health Care Plans to get further educational support and are in the process of referring them to Early Help for intervention around parenting strategies which were identified.
- A young person who was home schooled due to anxiety around travelling to school on public transport has enrolled at a new school, ready to begin in the new term, having built independence and confidence to travel by themselves. “I’ve been bored at home and want routine and structure to my week. It’s taken doing Pathfinders for me to realise this. It’s helped to think clearer and come out of my shell.” With her parent adding “It’s so good to see her smiling again and making friends.”
- 72% of children and young people we were able to collect data from have returned to their on-roll school with improved attendance or enrolled in a new school after attending the programme.
- 88% of children and young people showed a significant increase in positive relationships with other young people and their wider community, with an increased sense of belonging.



- 68% said it made them feel more able to deal with challenges and tricky situations.
- 64% said it helped them have more goals and dreams for their future, this increase in aspirations for the future is through learning new life-skills which support greater independence.
- 84% of children and young people showed an increase in their confidence to speak out about issues in their community that matter to them, by co-designing and delivering social action projects.
- For most individuals, the programme was the boost they needed to improve their wellbeing and allow them to see sight of their hopes and aspirations. We have included two case studies with this report to evidence this.



# Multi-Agency Child Exploitation and Contextual Safeguarding

In March 2024 the partnership saw the launch of the new [Multi-Agency Child Exploitation \(MACE\)](#) and [Contextual Safeguarding strategy 2024/27](#). This strategy builds upon the work of the previous strategy and outlines the continued commitment to a coordinated partnership approach to tackle all forms of child exploitation in North Yorkshire and ensure that the right resources are well trained, skilled and in place to drive the activity outlined within this strategy.

It focusses on:

- Child Sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) including County Lines, financial exploitation and organised crime groups)
- Children missing from home (MFH)
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Modern day slavery and human trafficking (MSHT)
- Online Child exploitation
- Peer on peer exploitation/teenage relationship abuse Radicalisation and extremism

The MACE and Contextual Safeguarding Strategy has identified four key priorities across the partnership. These four priorities will be underpinned by a detailed action plan that holds partners to account for their plans to fulfil the actions set out across our priority areas.



Prepare	Prevent	Protect	Pursue
Prepare the partnership and wider community in understanding scope and complexity of child exploitation and risk outside the home.	Commit to a whole partnership and wider community approach to prevention, contextual safeguarding and keeping children safe from exploitation.	To protect and support children at risk of or experiencing exploitation that does not label or blame them for the abuse they are experiencing.	Actively pursue, disrupt and respond to perpetrators of exploitation, and work collectively as a partnership to disrupt the exploitation of children in the contextual spaces they are spending their time.

## Achievements in 2023/2024

### Resources

- Continued development of the [Be Aware Knowledge Hub](#). Following the relaunch of the site in June 2022 the page is regularly updated with key updates in relation to child exploitation so partners know they can access relevant and up to date resources quickly and easily. These include specific resources-based on emerging trends of exploitation such as financial exploitation and sexually coerced extortion.
- Development of a support guide for the submission of partner intelligence via the Police Community Partnership Intelligence Portal [NYSCP \(safeguardingchildren.co.uk\)](#) and continued reinforcement of the message to partners in the vital role intelligence submission plays in the disruption of exploitation.

### Training

- Training has been delivered across the partnership to further develop the knowledge and skills of partners to understand and tackle exploitation. This has included regular updates at the Local Safeguarding Partnership meetings. Training sessions delivered to Health practitioners and education through the DSL conference as well as PSHE network meetings and headteacher briefings.
- In March 2024 to promote the launch of the new MACE strategy and to promote the National Child Exploitation Awareness Day an online programme of learning was made available for partners. 10 free online sessions were delivered covering topics such as:
  - Girls in Gangs – Delivered by St Giles Trust SOS+ programme
  - Early Intervention and Prevention in schools – Delivered by North Yorkshire Police
  - Child exploitation and the experiences of parents and carers – delivered by Ivison Trust
  - Sexually Coerced extortion and financial exploitation – delivered by the Children's Society
- The sessions were accessed by nearly 300 partners.

- With overwhelming positive feedback highlighting the value of the sessions. Many more have accessed the course recordings and materials which can be accessed here: [NYSCP \(safeguardingchildren.co.uk\)](#)
- A social media campaign was also promoted over social media which reached over 2500 people via the NYSCP.
- Training delivered to over 100 school staff in Scarborough.

"Thank you so much for the fantastic training you provided on 8/1/23. There were approximately 100 staff in the hall and the feedback has been very positive with staff commenting the training was very detailed, engaging and that they have all come away with a stronger knowledge and understanding of contextual safeguarding and exploitation."



### Partnership working:

- In June 2023 a series of 5 face-to-face MACE development sessions were delivered across the County. The sessions provided partners with the opportunity to meet, develop partnership links and have an open space to discuss locality-based themes linked to exploitation. The sessions were also used to liaise directly with MACE partners around

the development of the strategy and what they felt ongoing areas of focus needed to be. The sessions were attended by nearly 150 partners with positive feedback gathered as to the value of meetings and spending time back together face to face. The sessions will now be repeated yearly with upcoming sessions in June 2024.

- Following feedback from the development sessions, MACE partners now have access to a monthly secure MACE bulletin. The bulletin highlights good practice and creative disruption planning as well as shining a spotlight on partner roles and sharing key information in relation to emerging themes and trends and upcoming training. A MACE secure partnership directory has also been produced so MACE partners have easily accessible access to partner details in local areas to support with multi agency disruption planning.
- The national [Multi-Agency Practice Principles](#) for responding to child exploitation and extra familial harm are designed to support effective partnership working across local contexts to better respond to child exploitation. The eight evidence informed principles were reflected upon as an operational group, and discussion around this was used to shape the strategic priorities.
- The National Working Group completed observations sessions of Multi Agency Child Exploitation Level 2 meetings and provided feedback of the strong processes in place, the excellence of information sharing, strong partnership working that provided a “safe space for people to share ideas and think outside the box”. They also shared that in the meetings a “very positive commitment to children really shines through.”
- Ongoing use of the cross-partnership MACE data set, which is presented to strategic and operational groups quarterly, with key headlines also shared with MACE partners via the secure bulletin. This is used to further develop understanding of what exploitation looks like in North Yorkshire, horizon scan for emerging themes and trends and coordinate multi agency action planning to tackle key areas of vulnerability.

## Working with young people and parents/carers

- Increased promotion of the use of the ‘Mind of My own’ app. The App is used by Children and Families Service and is a tool to capture the voices and experiences of children and young people.
- Continued engagement with the North Yorkshire Youth Commission and the work of the “big conversation”, linking their priorities following consultation with young people aged 10-25 to the MACE strategic priorities. Members of the youth commission were consulted in the development of the MACE strategy and shared lots of positive feedback.
- An engagement exercise was also completed with Scarborough Youth Council Group, who were consulted on the strategy and have been working on an additional document aimed at what the strategy means for young people.
- An ongoing strategic focus on the support for victims of exploitation as they move through periods of transition, particularly as they approach adulthood and turn 18 and may still be vulnerable to exploitation, work is ongoing with the Safeguarding Adult Team and the preparing for adulthood.

## Child’s voice

**“Everyone in North Yorkshire who is being exploited, feels unsafe and put in dangerous situations can have someone safe and trustworthy to talk to, who will listen to them and not blame them and who will work with everyone they need to, to help keep young people safe and to stop the exploiters”**

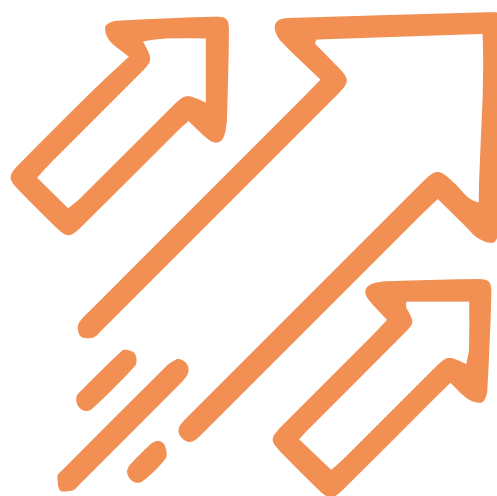
# Multi-agency Training and Learning

Our Masterclasses are recorded and can be viewed via our NYSCP YouTube Channel available from [www.youtube.com/@nyscp](https://www.youtube.com/@nyscp). 858 people booked on the NYSCP Masterclasses for 2023-2024, with 793 delegates in attendance. Between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024 these recordings received over 678 views. Our masterclasses can all be viewed through our [website](#), which we have found is an effective and flexible way of reaching wider partners.

<a href="#">Growing up in North Yorkshire</a>	Counter Terrorism Update	<a href="#">Learning from Audits</a>
<a href="#">Social, Emotional and Mental Health</a>	<a href="#">Making a Good Referral</a>	<a href="#">Reducing Parental Conflict</a>
<a href="#">Early Years Masterclass (Evening) (May)</a>	<a href="#">Drink Drive</a>	<a href="#">Modern Slavery</a>
<a href="#">Learning from LADO Cases</a>	<a href="#">Launch of new Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Strategy</a>	<a href="#">Early Years Masterclass (Evening) (October)</a>

We have gained an additional 74 subscribers via our YouTube channel and received 7.2K views of channel content, accounting for 646 hours of watch time. Our most watched YouTube videos for 2023-2024 were:

1. NYSCP Threshold Document with 1,932 views
2. Contextual Safeguarding 1 with 415 views
3. Sexting and Revenge Porn with 210 views
4. Contextual Safeguarding Keynote with 310 views
5. Signs of Safety Terminology with 220 views



## Safeguarding Week 2023

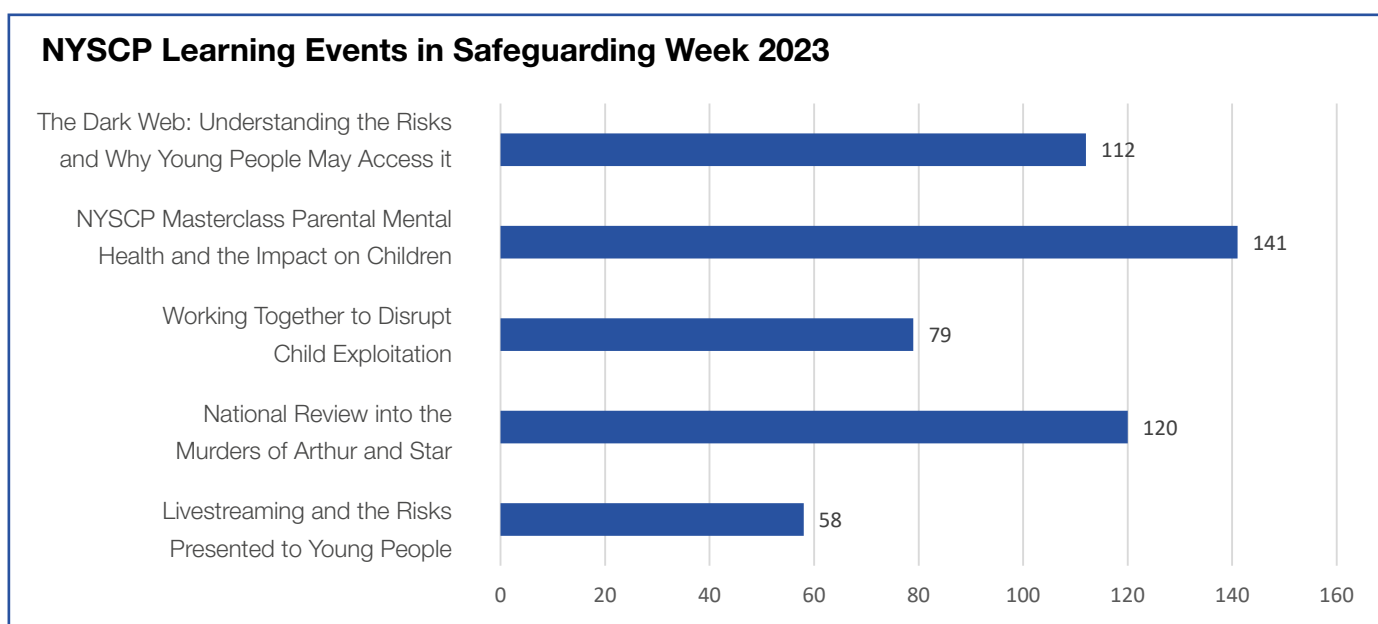
Partners from Safeguarding Adults Boards, Children's Safeguarding Partnerships and Community Safety Partnerships across North Yorkshire, the City of York and East Riding and Hull came together and developed an extensive programme of learning events, seminars and interactive sessions which all underpinned this year's theme – 'Safeguarding is everybody's business'.



Sessions held throughout the week were available for professionals as part of their personal development and members of the public for awareness and introduction to key topics. Based on these sessions:

- 44 virtual sessions held over 5 days
- 1112 delegates attended events
- 117 took part in feedback survey for sessions held by North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adults Board, Community Safeguarding Partnership and Safeguarding Children Partnership. Of these:
  - 61% of delegates stated they attended for professional interests with 39% personal and professional
  - 76% attended more than 2 sessions
  - 34% attended 2 sessions
  - 12% attended one session
  - 100% found the session informative
  - 100% found the session engaging
  - 99% thought that Safeguarding Week 2023 provided a good learning opportunity

Five learning events were delivered by the NYSCP as follows:







## Local Safeguarding Partnerships

Local Safeguarding Partnerships (LSPs) are local safeguarding meetings where partners come together. Professionals are based in Children, Adult and Community Safety services and aim to raise awareness of safeguarding in the local area and respond to local need. The groups identify learning needs, share good practice and deliver the local priorities within the Board and Partnership's business plans. We have four groups across the County in Harrogate/ Craven, Hambleton and Richmondshire, Selby and Scarborough and Ryedale. It is recognised that the LSPs play a vital role responding to issues in the locality and over the coming year work will be completed to strengthen the role they play in communities.

## Local Safeguarding Partnerships, (LSPs)

The Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP) Groups were engaged with Safeguarding Week 2023, with this being raised in each LSP meeting and there was some local delivery of safeguarding initiatives, including market stalls in public locations and other cooperative events.

## The NYSCP Website

Throughout the year, usage of the NYSCP website has continued to increase however, due to changes in the analytics system, only website usage between 18 June 2023 and 31 March 2024 is available. In this time there were:

- 239,915 pages of the website viewed
- 122K users of the website

The most visited pages of the website were:

1. [Homepage](#) with 24,217 views
2. [Be Aware Harmful Sexual Behaviours](#) with 19,632 views
3. [Worried about a child](#) with 18,615 views
4. [Resource Library](#) with 5330 views
5. [Procedures, Practice Guidance and One Minute Guides](#) with 5115 views

## Social Media

Social media is a constantly changing environment as platforms come and go and sites vary in popularity and reach. The NYSCP recognises the need to be adaptable and to share our messages on the most appropriate platforms. Following changes in Twitter to the X platform, there were a number of reports of people leaving the platform in favour of other alternatives. The NYSCP has continued to utilise the [X platform](#) as one of its primary methods of communication to raise awareness of safeguarding issues.

To improve direct access to a professional focused audience, the NYSCP has diversified into using [LinkedIn](#). This new social media stream is now open for professionals to follow and will be one of our primary communication routes to raise awareness and provide information.

The NYSCP has also continued to support [Facebook](#) throughout the year as an alternative platform of communications. While X has historically been focused more on professionals and Facebook more on parents and family communication, there has been a merger of parents and professionals access content from both sites. As a result many of the messages sent across both platforms have been harmonised.

During the year the NYSCP Business Unit has also developed a social media plan which looks to bring together our different media streams with evergreen messages. It allows the planning of key local campaigns and support for national and international events such as Safer Internet Day, Safeguarding Week, #AskMe and more.



## The NYSCP E-bulletin

Our monthly free e-bulletin continues to grow with 1848 people subscribed, a decrease from 2022-2023 due to a data cleanse of subscribers. The e-bulletin has covered a wide range of topics including:

- Keeping children safe online
- Safer internet day
- Child Exploitation
- Changes to referrals into social care
- Anti-bullying
- Supporting victims, gender and exploitation
- Suicide Prevention
- ICON
- Water Safety
- Alcohol Awareness
- Child Sexual Abuse Inquiry
- The Go-To for Health Minds in North Yorkshire

Sign up by visiting: [NYSCP \(safeguardingchildren.co.uk\)](https://safeguardingchildren.co.uk)

# Child Death Review Process

Child Death Review partners, the Local Authorities and Integrated Care Boards (ICB) for North Yorkshire and City of York hold responsibility for the delivery of the Child Death Review Process as set out in the Children Act 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 details how individual professionals and organisations across all sectors involved in the Child Death Review should contribute to guided standardised practice nationally and enable thematic learning to prevent future child deaths. The process is undertaken locally for all children who are normally resident within North Yorkshire and City of York.

The death of a child is something no parent, carer or professional ever wants to experience, however, sadly children do occasionally die and when they do it is the right thing that all available opportunities are taken in order to learn from that child's death in the hope that this will prevent the deaths of other children in the future. Thankfully less children die in North Yorkshire and York than in other areas and due to this it was agreed to combine the child death overview processes of North Yorkshire and York. As part of the ongoing work in the partnership in respect of becoming trauma informed, policies and procedures regarding children's deaths are being reviewed in order to better support parents, carers and professionals if they experience the death of a child.

The NYSCP are committed to learning from the circumstances and factors present in each death, and to;

- Identify any change that can be made or actions which can be taken that might help to prevent similar deaths in the future;
- Share learning with colleagues locally, regionally, and nationally so that the findings will have a greater impact;
- Analyse trends and targeted interventions that can be delivered in response to findings, for example, through an extensive multi-agency campaign of training and awareness raising.

For further information about these processes and to access our annual reports on children's deaths please visit [NYSCP \(safeguardingchildren.co.uk\)](https://safeguardingchildren.co.uk)

## 'Day or Night, Sleep Right'

Between 2017 and 2022, North Yorkshire Council (NYC) and City of York Council (COY) have had 10 babies who have died with a recorded cause of death as SUDI. In March 2021 a paper was presented to NYSCP Executives highlighting the need for a partnership response to reducing the risks of SUDI, with a particular focus on supporting families with additional vulnerabilities. This paper was in response to findings from a report published by the Safeguarding Children Practice Review Panel in July 2020 and learning arising from a number of North Yorkshire and York cases where there had been the unexpected death of an infant in families with existing safeguarding vulnerabilities.

The partnerships agreed to adopt a "Prevent and Protect Model" of SUDI Risk Minimisation. This model was subsequently named the 'Day or Night, Sleep Right' campaign and aimed to look at SUDI risk minimisation through a safeguarding lens, focusing on supporting professionals from all relevant agencies to feel competent and confident to work with families to promote safe sleep practice. In addition to an extensive program of single agency training, multi-agency training is available to practitioners. A multiagency masterclass developed which has now had **446** views on the NYSCP YouTube channel and SUDI podcast has been listened to **76** times.

The Day or Night, Sleep Right work is ongoing with the aim of establishing safe sleep as a fundamental aspect of multiagency work with families with additional vulnerabilities.

The campaign has been recognised by researchers at Durham University (Durham Infancy and Sleep Centre) as one of very few multiagency SUDI risk minimisation programmes across the Country'.  
[NYSCP \(safeguardingchildren.co.uk\)](https://safeguardingchildren.co.uk)

# Financial Position

The NYSCP budget is agreed annually, and contributions made by several partners outlined below.

Organisation	Contribution (£)	Percentage of Budget
North Yorkshire Council	178,295	49%
Integrated Care Board	92,511	30%
North Yorkshire Police	71,328	15%
City of York Partnership (Child Death Contribution)	20,193	5%
HM Prison and Probation Service	2,727	1%



# Priorities for 2024 – 2025

In line with the voices of children and young people as identified through the work with the North Yorkshire Youth Commission, the NYSCP have agreed that the priorities for the coming year continue to be:

## Criminal and Sexual Exploitation (including gender based violence and discrimination)

### Strengthening the Role of Education in the Partnership

The NYSCP Executive recognises the important role education plays in the lives of children and young people. When considering potential changes to Working Together Legislation [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 - consultation document \(education.gov.uk\)](#) it is felt important for the Partnership to consider how the role of education can be strengthened in partnership working.

### Children and Young People’s Emotional and Mental Health

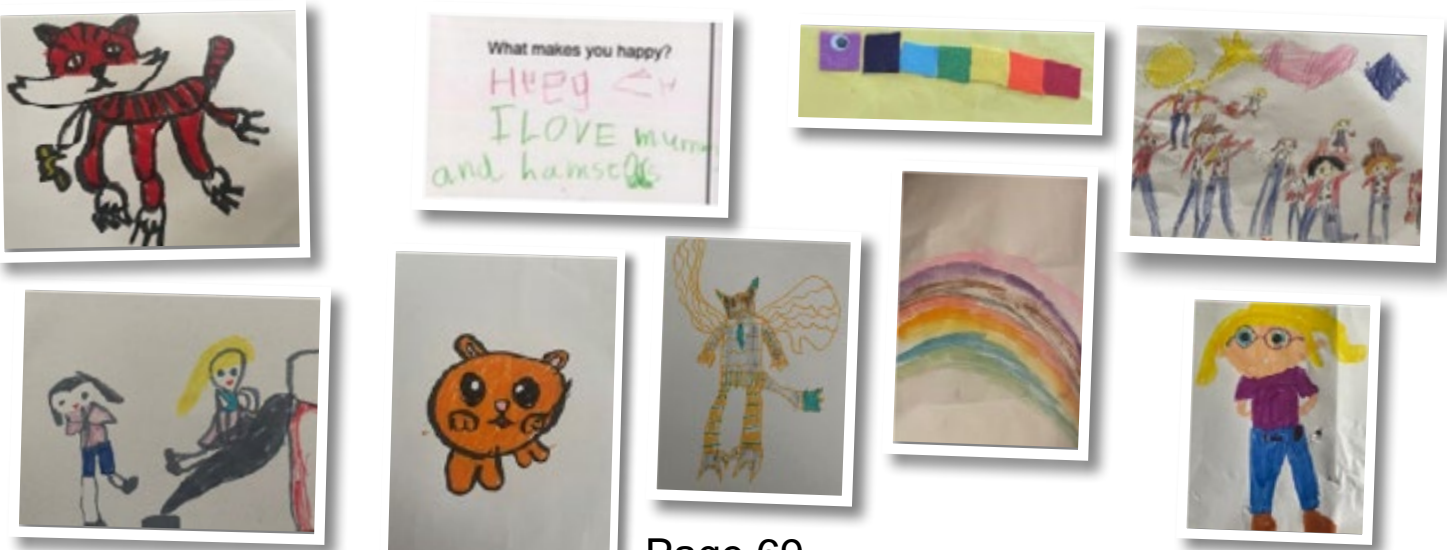
While considerable work has been undertaken by partners in this area, children and young people continue to report this as an area of concern so a focus will continue, to ensure children have access to the right support at the right time in respect of their emotional and mental wellbeing.

The NYSCP will also be working on the new iterations of the Early Help Strategy, Threshold Guidance and the Being Young in North Yorkshire Strategy. Consultation events have been organised to ensure there is a collaborative approach to refreshing the strategies which includes frontline practitioner and children and young people’s views.

### Online Safety

With artificial intelligence capabilities moving at pace the partnership recognises the importance of coming together to consider how technological assisted harm can be perpetrated against children and young people and to understand what can be done to prevent children experiencing harm in this area.

## Original artwork by a selection of talented young Yorkshire artists!





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## Authors:

North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Business Unit

Hannah Ellingworth, Alison Brunton, Kirsty Tuley, Kathryn Morrison and Haydn Rees Jones

## North Yorkshire Council

### Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Friday 4 October 2024

#### Motion of Full Council – Motion to Treat Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic

#### Report of the Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Democratic Services

##### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To update the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the outcome of the consultation with care leavers as agreed by the committee at their meeting on 21 June 2024.
- 1.2 For the committee to note the consultation and recommendations from the Corporate Parenting Members' Group, and for it to help inform their decision on the Notice of Motion that was referred from Full Council on 15 May 2024.
- 1.3 For the committee to make their recommendations to Full Council on 13 November 2024.

##### **2.0 SUMMARY**

- 2.1 This report provides an outline of the Notice of Motion that was proposed and seconded at Full Council on 15 May 2024 (Appendix 1) and referred to Scrutiny Board on 24 May 2024. The Scrutiny Board agreed to refer it to the next Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 June 2024.
- 2.2 The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee asked the Corporate Parenting Members' Group to undertake a consultation with care leavers on their behalf. This report provides details of the outcome of the consultation (Appendix 2).

##### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 At the Full Council meeting on 15 May 2024, a Notice of Motion was made for North Yorkshire Council to join over sixty other local councils by treating care experience as if it is a protected characteristic. The Motion was moved and seconded and referred to Scrutiny Board.
- 3.2 At the Scrutiny Board meeting on 24 May 2024, Members agreed to refer the Motion to Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.3 The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on 21 June 2024 and agreed that consultation with care leavers and care experienced young people was paramount before a decision could be made on the Notice of Motion. It was agreed that the Corporate Parenting Members' Group would be best placed to carry out this engagement, given that all of the members have specialist children and young people knowledge and have close working relationships with the Children and Young People's Directorate.

3.4 Between July and August 2024, the Leaving Care Service held a consultation workshop with 11 care leavers. Their report can be found at Appendix 2.

#### **4.0 KEY ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE CORPORATE PARENTING MEMBERS' GROUP**

4.1 The Corporate Parenting Members' Group appreciated that officers had emphasised to the care leavers that should the council formally adopt the characteristic, it was still the care leavers personal choice as to whether they wanted to disclose it or not.

4.2 Whilst there is strong practice embedded within the Children and Young People's Service around supporting care leavers, this is not the case across the whole of North Yorkshire Council. The group would like to see a more structured way of how the whole of the council supports young people leaving care. Members acknowledged that directorates are keen to support care leavers but have been restricted by both time and know-how. So being involved in a task and finish group will facilitate this. It will also give the Children and Young People's Service the opportunity to speak to other senior leaders about care leavers and the experiences and barriers they encounter.

4.3 The group agreed that treating Care Experience as a protected characteristic would have more implications for other directorates within the council than for Children and Young People's Service. If the council decided to formally adopt the new policy, it should not be tokenistic or a tick-box exercise.

#### **5.0 CORPORATE PARENTING MEMBERS' GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1 The Corporate Parenting Member's Group supports the recommendations made in the report, which are:

- 1) To establish a task and finish group made up of all directorates in the council to look at potential costs and implications if considering care experience as a protected characteristic.
- 2) To engage with young people leaving care, and to keep their views central to any decisions the council makes.
- 3) Once points 1) and 2) have been completed, for a further report to be presented to Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee with recommendations of whether the council should treat Care Experience as a protected characteristic.

The Corporate Parenting Members' Group will be happy to continue working closely with the service on this. They appreciated that due to time restrictions, a relatively small number of care leavers were consulted, but nonetheless, some very valid and meaningful points were raised.

#### **6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are likely to be some financial implications, for example, legal advice. At this early stage, officer time should be considered.

#### **7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 The Council will ensure that statutory guidance is followed if consulting and implementing the policy.

## 8.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Directorate has considered equality, most notably young people, and an equalities impact assessment will be updated as necessary before a decision is made.

## 9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Not relevant.

## 10.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 10.1 Formally recognising Care Experience as a protected characteristic supports the Council Plan priority themes of:

### Health and Well-Being

- Young care leavers are supported by all directorates to have a good quality of life.
- Reduces inequality.

### Organisation

- A well-led and forward-thinking council.

## 11.0 OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 11.0 Taking account of the information within this report and the issues raised at the meeting, the options available to the Committee are:

### Agree the Motion

Agree no further information is required and agree a recommendation to go to the next meeting of Full Council on 13 November 2024.

### Not uphold the Motion

Agree no further information is required and that the Motion is not progressed. Recognise the complexities and demands of the Motion upon council resources.

### Not uphold the Motion and agree an alternative way forward

Officers can examine an alternative approach within the context of current capacity and cross-cutting strategic priorities.

## 12.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

### 12.1 RECOMMENDATION(S)

For Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee to:

- Note the recommendations made in the Treating Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic Report
- Note the recommendation made by the Corporate Parenting Members' Group at their meeting on 11 September 2024
- Consider the Notice of Motion that was referred to Scrutiny Board by Full Council at their meeting of 15 May 2024 and make a recommendation to

the meeting of Full Council to consider at their meeting on 13 November 2024.

**APPENDICES:**

Appendix 1 – Notice of Motion proposed and seconded at Full Council on 15 May 2024

Appendix 2 – Treating Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic Report

Barry Khan

Assistant Chief Executive, Legal and Democratic Services

Northallerton

Report Author – Alice Fox, Senior Scrutiny Officer



Care Leavers Notice of Motion – 15 May 2024 Full Council

Young people leaving social care are already in a vulnerable situation, and they are often subject to discrimination when attempting to get a job or find a place to live. Indeed, some housing providers directly stipulate “no care leavers”.

The effect of this discrimination is to push these young people, who are already vulnerable, into hostels and shelters where they are easy targets for exploitation and victimisation by criminal gangs.

We call on this council to join over sixty other local councils in the UK by treating care experience as if it is a protected characteristic by:

- Ensuring that during development of future policy and service provision, impact on those who have had care experience is considered alongside impact on those with other protected characteristics.
- Including care leavers and children in care in its equality objectives and reports, alongside those with other protected characteristics.
- Proactively seeking out and listening to people who have experience of care, especially when considering decisions which affect them.
- Formally calling on central government to add care experience as a protected characteristic in the Equality Act, as recommended by the 2022 Independent Review of Children’s Social Care.
- Formally calling on other bodies, such as academy trusts, housing providers, and the new combined authority to treat care experience as if it is a protected characteristic in similar ways.

Proposed Cllr Andrew Timothy  
Seconded Cllr Chris Aldred

# Treating Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic

## Initial Report

**Maggie Allen, Jonny Hoyle, Nicki Watkinson**

### Introduction

In 2022, The Independent Review of Children’s Social Care recommended that Care Experience should become a protected characteristic as an addition to the protected characteristics already defined by the Equality Act 2010.

In its response, the government declined to take this forward, saying that it was concerned that by doing so it might increase the stigma relating to Care Experience but the author, Josh MacAlister, has continued to support this recommendation, telling the Moving On Up Network in 2024 that Local Authorities have a “moral duty” to treat Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic. There is a well-publicised national campaign, led by care experienced people, for Local Authorities to adopt this motion and to date, 92 Local Authorities have signed up.

As corporate parents we have a duty to consider our role in this and this paper will set out the framework, rationale and recommendations.

For the purpose of clarity this report will discuss Care Leavers, as defined by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and people with Care Experience, which is broadly accepted to refer to people who have been in care during childhood. Care Leavers are a defined group but are also represented in the Care Experienced community.

When referencing Protected Characteristics as defined by the Equality Act (2010) these are:

- Age
- Disability
- Sex
- Gender reassignment

- Marriage or Civil Partnerships (in employment only)
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sexual Orientation

### **Background**

Care Experienced people face significant barriers and discrimination throughout their lives. An overt example of this was a letting agent in Manchester advertising a property which read “No history of substance misuse...., no care leavers, no criminal convictions”. There was outrage about the advert but this is not an isolated example. Care experienced people face discrimination and stigma in areas across housing, health, education, relationships, employment and the criminal justice system.

Care Leavers are underrepresented in all of the areas we would want your children to be in and overrepresented in all of the areas we wouldn't. Statistics from the Department for Education in 2022 show that if you are a Care Leaver in England you are twice as likely to be a prisoner as you are to be an apprentice. Approximately 13% of Care Leavers go to university compared with 43% of the general population and a UCL study in 2018 found that if you are Care Experienced you are 70% more likely to die prematurely than someone who is not Care Experienced.

In North Yorkshire we work hard to achieve the very best outcomes for our care leavers, and whilst those outcomes are better than our statistical neighbours, they are still far behind those of the general population.

There have been some misconceptions that by making Care Experience a protected characteristic we could inadvertently create additional labels and stereotypes for the Care Experience community. Our view is that having and using a protected characteristic is a personal choice and therefore if an individual didn't want their characteristic to be disclosed, they have the choice and autonomy not to disclose it.

There has also been some criticism in the sector about local authorities who have adopted this motion but without then implementing meaningful changes.

### **North Yorkshire Context**

Currently we support 522 young people who meet the criteria to be defined as Care Leavers but there are many more citizens of North Yorkshire who are Care Experienced, meaning they have spent some time in care but not enough, or not at the right time, to be deemed a Care Leaver.

Care Leavers are supported by our Care Planning and Support teams and Children's Disabilities Teams until they reach 18 and then are supported by our Leaving Care Teams based in 4 localities across the county.

Our services were judged by OFSTED to be outstanding in consecutive inspections. We have a strong Local Offer to Care Leavers and we work hard to maintain positive relationships with our colleagues in Housing, Job Centres and the Health Service in an effort to maximise the support available to Care Leavers in North Yorkshire. We have also created the "Always Here" offer for care leavers which means that regardless of their age, we will always offer information, advice and guidance to young people. This offer is a leading offer in the country and many more authorities are now working to create something similar.

It is anticipated that treating Care Experience as a protected characteristic would have many more implications for the other directorates in the council than it does for the Children and Young People's Service.

We already have many initiatives established that would contribute to our "reasonable adjustments" if we were to treat Care Experience as a protected characteristic. Examples of this are that we guarantee interviews to Care Leavers who meet the minimum requirements for jobs within North Yorkshire Council; there is a section on the application section which enables Care Leavers to identify someone who can support them with their applications and we are able to ringfence Apprenticeship opportunities for Care Leavers. The leisure centres offer free access to care leavers and looked after children with their foster carer. NYC care leavers are exempt from paying council tax within North Yorkshire

Recently, Nicki Watkinson worked with colleagues in Leisure and Tourism to obtain free tickets to shows at Scarborough's Open Air Theatre, in addition to free access to other tourism related activities for children in care, care leavers and foster carers.

If we were to consider Care Experience as a protected characteristic we would need to widen understanding of what this means to all areas of the council including, but not limited to, planning, the delivery of adult social care, GDPR and data collection, Public Health, commissioning and housing.

### **Implications**

Recognising Care Experience as a protected characteristic in North Yorkshire would mean that we would apply the same principles as we currently do with the other protected characteristics.

We would need to undertake and amend our Equalities Impact Assessment and would need to amend some of the council policies to reflect that we are considering Care

Experience as a protected characteristic. A practical example of the types of policies we might amend as a result would be to amend the Leave Policy in areas such as Compassionate Leave to include Previous Foster Carers everywhere that currently designates parents or close family members.

By amending the Equalities Impact assessment, we would effectively be asking all officers of the council to consider the impact of changes specifically on people with Care Experience alongside the other protected characteristics and to be mindful of direct or indirect discrimination.

### **Young People's views**

The Leaving Care Service undertook an initial workshop with a group of care leavers. The first element of the workshop was helping young people understand what the Equality Act is, and how it might be applied.

Overall, the feedback from this session was positive in favour of Care Experience being recognised as a protected characteristic. A summary of their feedback was:

*'It would be a good thing as many people don't know what a care leaver is and therefore they may have more understanding if it is a protected characteristic if for example we act in a certain way or sometimes behave differently'*

*'I definitely feel like It would be positive to have protected characteristics for care leavers, care leavers are generally under represented anyway and this will make it more formal and therefore make a difference and in turn will inform people and enable more research. I think good examples of where we may need additional support (protected characteristics) in the work place and at college/university are if we are suffering from mental health linked in to the trauma we may have suffered and our experiences as children – there is a need for additional awareness and support and possibly time off if needed. We also need to be prioritised for schemes within the workplace such as CBT and therapy if it is offered via occupational health/human resources. Also possible awareness that we do not have the support of families etc and have more financial commitments as may be living in independence early so help with travel costs or excepting that we may need to work from home more. Also to recognise foster parents as parents and have bereavement leave etc in line with blood relatives.*

*'no idea'*

*'A bit more leniency for first year trainee's in job roles and to protect care leavers from bullying due to their circumstances.'*

*'It would be a good thing, care leavers have been through so many different experiences that others have not, for young people claiming asylum many people can never imagine what they have been through, they have the added issue of struggling with language and getting used to different cultures and how we do things differently and different religions (for example needing to pray in work time).'*

*'Definitely as good thing and it should have already been done. All work places should offer counselling'*

*'Yes it would be a positive thing but we also need to make sure we don't get special treatment and circled out as others would wonder why we are getting special treatment. Sometimes workplaces are not aware of the challenges we face, living for example in homeless shelters and not having money to eat but being expected to work long shifts'*

*'Yes it is a good idea, we may need time off for things like this trip and engaging with our support workers but it is a tricky one as I told work gradually that I was a care leaver and some may not want work to know they are. Everyone deserves a chance to work and if you can't manage work because of your background and experiences and lack of support in work something needs to change.'*

*'A good idea, I know someone who has ADHD and emotional health needs and she needs so much more support to be able to work.'*

## **Cost and Risk**

There would be some internal costs to adopting Care Experience as a protected characteristic. We would need to create a working group to map and implement the changes to our policies, or we could repurpose a group like the Multi-Agency Looked After



Partnership to firstly recognise the new council's approach to corporate parenting and at the same time consider how we would disseminate learning and consideration across the whole council.

We would also need to obtain legal advice in relation to our position. The approach that other local authorities have taken is to create a "local protected characteristic" which is not enforceable in law using the Equality Act 2010 but would be enforceable in relation to the council's duties to comply with its Equality and Diversity Policies.

As a leading and ambitious local authority there might be a reputational risk if we didn't adopt Care Experience as a protected characteristic in light of the recommendation of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care and the national campaign, led by care experienced people which currently has 92 local authorities signed up.

North Yorkshire is an innovative local authority. We created the Moving On Up network which champions apprenticeships for Care Leavers. The network is sector leading and influential with policy makers, employers, local authorities and training providers. The last Moving On Up network was dedicated to the topic of Protected Characteristics. Held on the 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024 there were over 200 attendees who provided mixed reviews from Local Authorities who had adopted care experience as a protected characteristic. Some felt they had adopted it but weren't sure what they would do differently as a result, whilst others had adopted it and had made some progress on areas such as ringfencing opportunities for care leavers, which is something we have been doing for a number of years.

### **Recommendation**

Recognising care experience as a protected characteristic is the method that a large number of Local Authorities have pursued but the goal is to minimise the inequalities the care experienced community faces.

As a leading, bold and innovative local authority our recommendation is that we should pursue formally recognising care experience as a protected characteristic, but we should do this with a focus on affecting meaningful change.

We should create a task and finish group with representation from all directorates in the council to carefully consider the implications of considering care experience a protected characteristic. As discussed earlier, we have already been able to implement many changes to recognise the disadvantages care leavers face.

We should seek legal advice about the impact on the council as a whole of adopting this motion.

We should provide a workshop to senior leaders across all directorates about care experience and the varied roles and responsibilities of corporate parents and we should offer ideas about how each directorate could recognise the disadvantage care experienced people have and some of the ways these could be mitigated.

We should allocate a project manager to oversee the transformation and implement changes as necessary. Feeding back to the new, repurposed Multi Agency Looked After Partnership.

We should use this forum to share examples of how all areas of North Yorkshire Council are exercising their corporate parenting responsibilities and working towards positively impacting the outcomes for our care experienced members of society.

**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2024/2025**

**SCOPE OF THE COMMITTEE**

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

**MID CYCLE BRIEFING - THURSDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2024 AT 2.00PM**

Draft Work Programme 2024/25	Consideration of work programme and agenda items for Committee meeting on 4 <sup>th</sup> October 2024
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**COMMITTEE MEETING - FRIDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2024 AT 10.00AM**

ITEM	DRAFT OUTLINE/COMMENT	METHOD	LEAD
Child Death Overview Panel – Annual Report 2023/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on the number of children who have died; whether the death was expected or unexpected; and the category of death</li> </ul>	Report and presentation	Assistant Director, Children and Families
North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NYSCP) - Annual Report 2023/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary of the work of the Partnership between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024.</li> </ul>	Report and presentation	Corporate Director
Children Accessing Alternative provision (including Health needs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General update; numbers; reasons, etc</li> </ul>	Presentation	Assistant Director, Education and Skills
Treating Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic – Consultation with Care Leavers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key findings from consultation</li> </ul>	Report	Chair of Corporate Parenting Members' Group

**MID CYCLE BRIEFING - FRIDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2024 AT 11.00AM**

Draft Work Programme 2024/25	Consideration of work programme and agenda items for Committee meeting on 6 <sup>th</sup> December 2024
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**COMMITTEE MEETING - FRIDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2024 AT 10.00AM**

ITEM	DRAFT OUTLINE/COMMENT	METHOD	LEAD
SEND Provision in the Scarborough and Whitby Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update on progress against the suggested actions in the report of the Task and Finish Group on SEND Provision in the Scarborough and Whitby Area - one year on from when the report was presented to this Committee</li> </ul>	Report	TBC
North Yorkshire SACRE Annual Report 2023/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examination results in Religious Education.</li> <li>How SACRE has engaged with Schools</li> <li>Progress against its Development Plan</li> </ul>	Presentation	Assistant Director, Education and Skills
SEND Employment Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update</li> </ul>	Presentation	TBC

**MID CYCLE BRIEFING – FRIDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2024 AT 2.00PM**

Draft Work Programme 2024/25

Consideration of work programme and agenda items for Committee meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2025

**COMMITTEE MEETING - WEDNESDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2025 AT 10.00AM**

ITEM	DRAFT OUTLINE/COMMENT	METHOD	LEAD
Schools Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The current picture, in terms of figures for all North Yorkshire Schools and Academies, including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Performance and standards</li> <li>- Funding</li> <li>- Strategic planning</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Financial position</li> </ul>	Report/Presentation	Assistant Director, Education and Skills and Assistant Director, Strategic Resources
Criminal exploitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An update on those areas where criminals seek to exploit children and young people. For example, County Lines</li> </ul>	Presentation	Assistant Director, Children and Families
Director of Public Health Annual Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of Public Health to share the main outcomes and conclusions from her Annual Report, together with priorities for the year ahead</li> </ul>	Presentation	Director of Public Health

**ITEMS FOR MID CYCLE BRIEFING**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>POTENTIAL ITEM</b>
Tuesday 25 <sup>th</sup> July 2024 at 2.00pm (in respect of the Committee meeting on 4 <sup>th</sup> October)	To be determined
Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 11.00 a.m. (in respect of the Committee meeting on 6 <sup>th</sup> December)	To be determined
Friday 24 <sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 2.00pm (in respect of the Committee meeting on 19 <sup>th</sup> March)	To be determined