

# North Yorkshire County Council

## Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2022 at 10.00 a.m.

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

County Councillors: Val Arnold, Stephanie Duckett, Cliff Lunn, Richard Musgrave and Annabel Wilkinson.

Co-opted Members: Tom Cavell-Taylor (Governor Representative), Emma Higgins (Roman Catholic Church), David Sharp (Voluntary Sector)

Portfolio Holder: County Councillor Janet Sanderson, Executive Member for Children's Services.

Officers:

Stuart Carlton, Corporate Director - Children and Young People's Service, Patrick Duffy, Principal Democratic Services Scrutiny Officer, Emma Lonsdale, Children's Commissioning Manager (Health) and Cerys Townend, Interim Head of Inclusion

In attendance: County Councillor Karin Sedgwick, Chair of the Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Lorna Galdas, Commissioning Manager, North Yorkshire Clinical Commissioning Group and Naomi Lonergan, Head of Mental Health, Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust,

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lindsay Burr, John Mann, Joe Plant and Gillian Quinn, Stephen Maltby (Primary Teacher Representative), Andrew Smith (Church of England Representative), Ross Strachan (Secondary Teacher Representative), David Watson (Voluntary Sector) and Portfolio Holder, County Councillor Patrick Mulligan, Executive Member for Education and Skills

---

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

---

### **244. Welcome and introductions**

The Chair welcomed people to the meeting and Members introduced themselves.

The Chair made the following statement:

*You will have seen the statement on the Agenda frontsheet about current decision-making arrangements within the Council, following the expiry of the legislation permitting remote committee meetings. I just want to remind everyone, for absolute clarity, that this is an informal meeting of the Committee Members. Any formal decisions required will be taken by the Chief Executive Officer under his emergency delegated decision-making powers after taking into account any of the views of the relevant Committee Members and all relevant information. This approach has been agreed by full Council and will be reviewed in February 2022.*

## **245. Minutes**

### **Resolved –**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021, be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

## **246 Any Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

## **247. Public Questions**

There were no public questions or statements.

## **248. Chair's Remarks**

The Chair updated as follows:-

There had been an interesting Mid Cycle Briefing in January.

She and Councillor Annabel Wilkinson, as the Young People's Champion, had attended the Executive on 22nd February, in connection with the Quarter 3 Performance Reports; they had asked questions and received good responses.

There are two new Co-opted Members joining the Committee. Andrew Smith, Director of Education at the York Diocese, will represent the Church of England and Emma Higgins, Director of Schools, Standards and Catholic Life at the Middlesbrough Diocese, will be the representative of the Roman Catholic Church.

We look forward to their involvement in the Committee.

NOTED.

## **249. Children's Mental Health**

### **Considered –**

A joint presentation by the following:-

- Lorna Galdas, Commissioning Manager, North Yorkshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- Naomi Lonergan, Director of Operations, Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust
- Emma Lonsdale, Children's Commissioning Manager for Health, Children and Young People's Service
- Cerys Townend, Interim Head of Inclusion, Children and Young People's Service

Their presentation is available via this link:-

[Children's Mental Health](#)

Lorna Galdas introduced the presentation. She advised that the reason the presentation comprised officers from the NHS and the Local Authority is because they wanted to look at the whole system approach.

Lorna outlined the *Thrive Framework*, which is a national framework, based on five categories, with an emphasis on good mental health and prevention. The categories are:-

- *Thriving* – those who experience the normal ups and downs of life but who do not require individualised support. About 80% of children and young people are in this category
- *Getting advice* – those who need advice and signposting
- *Getting help* – those who need more focused input
- *Getting more help* – those who require more extensive and specialist support provided by the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service, or the specialist Eating Disorders Service
- *Getting risk support* – those with more complex difficulties who access services provided by Crisis Services; “No wrong door”; and inpatient services

She referred to the Mini Marketplace document that had been circulated to Members as background information, which outlines services available to young people in North Yorkshire.

Emma Lonsdale outlined the demand for services and highlighted the following:-

- Increased demand has been a factor for many years – not just since Covid-19. Many services have seen an increase in complexity and acuity, with a noticeable increase in eating disorders.
- Services have responded well and adapted to new ways of working.
- The Healthy Child Programme, which prioritises emotional health and wellbeing, is an area that she is responsible for. There has been an increase in demand to the Programme, with the result that services are becoming more pressured and stretched.
- We want young people to receive the right service. The actual service offer for Children’s Mental Health in North Yorkshire has increased but, in some services, waiting times have increased. With Compass Phoenix, for instance, the average waiting time has increased from 22 days in Quarter 2, to 39 days in Quarter 3.

Naomi Lonergan appraised the Committee as follows:-

- Her service area - Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) - is providing treatment to 2,500 children and young people and approximately 149 clients are waiting for assessment, with the majority of those waiting up to three months. Work has been undertaken to improve the service’s knowledge and understanding of the young people waiting, to ensure that an element of safety is built into processes.
- As with other areas of mental health, managing demand is a key challenge, particularly with waiting times for eating disorders, where the average number of people accessing the service has risen from 100 to over 300 in 2021 and has now stabilised to 200 by the end of last year. This presents considerable challenges.

- There has also been an increased trend in the number of children and young people referred with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.
- Since July 2020, a 24-hour Crisis Service has been in operation.
- Some children have presented as very unwell and this has significant risks for their physical health and development.
- The service is focused on meeting target times and is examining how this can be achieved.
- Clients are risk-assessed and CAMHS keep in touch with them to ascertain if they need to be seen sooner, should there be a change in their condition.
- All young people and their families have access to free digital support, via Kooth; the Go to signposting website and Compass Buzz Us – a text messaging service.

Cerys Townsend referred to the outcomes in the Growing up in North Yorkshire Survey 2020. This is a Survey carried out with pupils in Years 2, 6, 8 and 10 and undertaken every two years.

A low wellbeing score can indicate that there is a mental health need.

In the last Survey, in 2020, the responses indicate that, for the majority of our Schools, the wellbeing and resilience of children and young people has declined over time.

For self-harm and suicide questions, there was signposting within the Survey for children if the Survey raised questions for them and they wanted to talk to an adult about this. The number of children and young people self-harming has increased.

In terms of body image and eating disorders, 35% of young people said they regularly make themselves sick, or dieted to an extreme degree, or undertook an unusual amount of exercise to lose weight.

A good deal of joint work is undertaken between the Local Authority and Health colleagues. For example, Locality SEND Hubs, which provide a range of specialist support and provision to children with Special Educational Needs and Disability. The SEMH Network works across the four Locality SEND Hubs to support Schools to meet the needs of children and young people with Social and Emotional Mental Health. Since September 2021, the SEND Locality Hubs have supported 351 children through the SEMH Pathway.

Emma Lonsdale mentioned that, notwithstanding the increase in demand and waiting times, a lot of work has been carried out, including the Suicide and Self Harm Pathway, as part of the Children's Services Partnership. Good feedback has been received about this.

Emma outlined some of the work being undertaken at a strategic and operational level.

Strategically, a Mental Health Summit, attended by Senior Leaders across the system, committed to develop system wide transformation in response to identifiable increases in demand and pressures.

The joint commissioning of Compass and Phoenix is an exciting development, with two separate funding sources being combined to bring a much larger offer.

Operational developments include the Anna Freud Project. These are Workshops with local Schools to support the development of partnerships between Schools and Mental Health Leaders to improve access to services.

A Department for Education (DfE) Return to Schools Grant has been used enabling, among other things, Wellbeing return training for all Schools to access; the employment of a Project Officer to support implementation of SEMH; an Emotional Health and Wellbeing Delivery Group; and webinars to support Schools in managing School refusal, due to anxiety.

The Chair and Members thanked the presenters for their excellent and informative presentation.

The Chair commented that mental health is very much to the fore and asked how differentiation is made between routine and urgent eating disorders. Naomi Lonergan responded that the distinction is mainly around the level of risk, with a very strong physical health element.

The Chair also asked about the increase in waiting times for Compass Phoenix in Hambleton and Richmondshire - from 6 days in Quarter 2 to 52 days in Quarter 2. Emma Lonsdale advised that Compass Phoenix respond to mild to moderate mental health difficulties; they tend not to deviate from these conditions, as that is what the service is there to offer.

Councillor Annabel Wilkinson asked:-

- What is being done to reduce waiting times?
- Is the service operating at full complement?
- What do officers envisage in terms of joint working in the future?

In response, Naomi Lonergan said that the intention is to see all children and young people within four weeks for assessment, but this is under strain due to the demand. As a system, we need to get people to the most appropriate service in a timely way. The service keeps in touch with people whilst they are waiting.

Naomi added that the service is challenged with regard to staffing. There is higher turnover than previously, with staff changing role, function and job. There is also a challenge in attracting people to come to some of our coastal communities. In terms of the question on future joint working, we need to work differently and engage the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors in being part of the solution and supporting them in this process.

In response to a question from Councillor Richard Musgrave, Naomi said that forecasting has shown there is likely to be an increase in demand for mental health services over the next five years - particularly for children and young people. It is possible that there will be unmet need, but if we can give people plenty of opportunities to be supported and to come forward, this will help alleviate the situation.

In response to a further question by Councillor Musgrave, Lorna Galdas confirmed that the Thriving Framework recommended that about 80% of children and young people would be in the thriving part of the quadrant. Some will go out of that and then come back into thriving. It is about the normal ups and down people have, but they will be able to navigate these within the thriving section.

Emma Lonsdale added that that is where the *Thriving* part of the quadrant, referred to in the presentation by Lorna Galdas, is key. There needs to be good opportunities for young people to engage with each other and to push their boundaries. We need to ensure that the thriving element is strong and not just concentrate on the other elements.

Cerys Townend commented that it is important to look at the bigger picture. There is huge demand on speech and language services and we know there is a correlation between children and young people not being able to communicate and their social and emotional mental health.

Councillor Stephanie Duckett commented that we could be at the start, rather than the peak, as younger children will never have experienced pre-school activities.

David Sharp said he was interested how the Voluntary Sector could help. The Safeguarding Board, which he is a Member of, has bite-sized training for the Voluntary Sector. If we can get community groups to understand the signs and symptoms that young people go through, we can have the right conversations at the right time. Can the Sector get involved in producing something for these groups? Lorna Galdas responded that the CCG is committed to involving the Voluntary Sector. There is a small pot of funding going live shortly for some funding for the Sector to support dealing with pressures on children and young people's mental health.

Councillor Annabel Wilkinson commented that whilst things can seem difficult, children and young people are very resilient. Therefore, whilst there are concerns, it is important to stay positive too.

The Chair referred to the Mini Marketplace document and asked if there had been an increase in Obsessive Compulsion Disorder. Naomi Lonergan said she would ascertain this information, but we do know that low-level anxiety and depression is an expected consequence of Covid-19. Covid has impacted on people's mental health - even if they have not contracted the virus themselves. People have, for example, lost loved ones and not been able to grieve in the normal way.

Councillor Karin Sedgwick felt it was encouraging that the situation is being addressed. In her role, as Chair of the Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it was the older population who were the main focus. Therefore, it has been interesting to hear what is being done to address issues among people at a younger level. She will follow up with David Sharp on the point he made.

The Chair concluded the discussion by saying that this is an area that needs to be considered further by the Committee, in due course, as the work undertaken with children and young people can help to prevent problems at a later stage. She reiterated her thanks to the officers for their excellent presentation.

## **250 Annual Update of the Young People's Champion**

### **Considered -**

A report by Councillor Annabel Wilkinson, the Young People's Champion, which outlined the work that she had undertaken in this role during the last year.

She highlighted the following, in particular:-

- Her role is to raise awareness of the views and concerns of young people, making sure their voice is heard; to be supportive of them; and to support the work of the Executive Member for Children's Services; officers in Children and Young People's Services and fellow members.
- During the Pandemic, we have seen a wonderful response from North Yorkshire in supporting young people, working in different ways to keep children happy and safe.
- The New Youth Voice and Engagement Team are wonderful. She is looking forward to the get together a week on Saturday at Carlton Lodge, as it has been difficult for the young people not to have been able to meet up.
- Looking to the future, it could be that young people will be a part of each Area Constituency Committee. This would be a valuable experience for young people and Members.

She expressed her thanks to the Executive Member for Children's Services and the Chair of this Committee, who had been open and transparent and actioned any concerns that she had passed on.

She also expressed her appreciation to officers in the Children and Young People's Service, including Mel Hutchinson, Stuart Carlton and Martin Kelly; Julie Bunn, the virtual Head Teacher; the Looked After Children Service; David Watson, from the Voluntary Sector and Ray Busby, Democratic Services, for the support he had provided,

It had been a pleasure to undertake the role.

The Chair asked Councillor Wilkinson what part of her role had been the most enjoyable. Councillor Wilkinson said this had been working with the young people.

Sturt Carlton thanked Councillor Wilkinson for the work that she had undertaken. This is an important role and she had carried it out in an exemplary fashion.

Councillor Janet Sanderson referred to the dedication that Councillor Wilkinson had shown - she had acted as a critical friend, holding her to account.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Councillor Wilkinson for what she had done.

## 251 Schools Update

**NOTE: David Sharp declared an interest in this item insofar as it related to Northallerton High School, as he is a Member of the Learning Trust.**

**Considered:-**

A presentation by the Corporate Director for Children and Young People's Service.

The presentation comprised information on:

- Strategic Planning
- School Funding 2022/2023
- School Performance
- Strategic Priorities

- School Improvement
- Safeguarding within recent Inspections
- Published Inspection Overview
- Monitoring Inspections
- Autumn Term Planning Meetings.

The Corporate Director highlighted a number of matters, including the following:-

- There are 364 schools in the county – 233 Local Authority and 131 Academies.
- There is a consultation on attendance, based on a new Government Strategy. Attendance at North Yorkshire Schools remained high and Schools have done a good job. Numbers of infections are now declining, thankfully. However, this will remain a focus for the Directorate.
- Work around strategic planning includes Good Estate Management for Schools and the Schools Admissions Policy 2022/2023, which has been approved by Council.
- The School Monitoring and Intervention Programme has been radically changed.
- Schools funding for 2022/2023 had increased by 3.2% overall and pupil led funding will be enhanced by 2%. We are lobbying for the National Funding Formula to increase the minimum level of funding, as we are still behind the national average.
- The DfE has agreed to change its distance measures from *as the crow flies* to go by the road distance. This is a good outcome.
- An additional £3.5 million for sparsity funding has been received. This will benefit 78 Schools. There remains concern for small Secondary Schools, in particular, where sparsity funding has not come through. The Directorate continue to lobby hard and is consulting with Schools about a temporary introduction of a School Sparsity Formula. The Directorate will also continue to lobby to ensure small Secondary Schools are funded equitably.
- Schools still face additional expenses and challenges through, for instance, rising energy costs and pay awards.
- On School Performance, there has been a decline in the number of schools adjudged by Ofsted to be “Good” or “Outstanding” but this has now evened out.
- It is a strategic priority to know our Schools, through an increased core offer, which will ensure that we have a clear and accurate understanding of the School Improvement Priorities in Local Authority Schools.
- There have been more than 60 visits to Schools since September 2021 with far greater emphasis on safeguarding and monitoring.
- Ofsted inspections since September 2021 have shown 92% of schools to be effective in safeguarding.
- A total of 119 safeguarding single central record checks have been carried out in Local Authority Schools since summer 2021.
- A joint Training Day for School Leaders was held in September 2021 by Ofsted and the Directorate, with over 300 delegates attending. Ofsted have taken this format and will use it as an example of good practice.



- From September 2021 to date, a number of schools previously adjudged as “Requiring Improvement” are now classed as “Good”. There are issues for some Academies around safeguarding. He has been in discussion with the Regional Schools Commissioner and his Directorate will think through how it works through these issues with the Schools, even though they are Academies, to ensure we do not see this happening to our own Schools
- On monitoring Inspection outcomes, it is pleasing to see Leaders and those responsible for governance have taken/are taking effective action.
- In the Autumn Term, 233 planning meetings were held on School Improvement. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive on the new process and support and challenge, with Schools seeing the sharpening and change in the work we do. They *strongly agree* or *agree* in high numbers on the key questions we asked such as: Is it working?; Is it beneficial?; Is the communication right? and are we getting the feedback right? Therefore, we feel we are on the right track with this revised Strategy, informed by feedback. We will pause, review and re-implement for the following year.

In response to a question from the Chair about the two Academies who had been found to have safeguarding issues, the Corporate Director said the Schools concerned had been adjudged “Inadequate”, which means they will have to demonstrate to the Regional Schools Commissioner they have the capacity to rapidly improve.

Councillor Annabel Wilkinson asked whether the Corporate Director had any concerns about the number of Governors. He advised that training for Governors has much improved. Covid led to much of the training being online and this has resulted in better attendance. We could always do with more Governors and it remains a challenge to encourage people to come forward, but he feels assured that the Directorate is doing better on Governor Training and the support that is provided.

Councillor Stephanie Duckett mentioned that a High School in her Division had approached her to say there had not been sufficient consultation about Boroughbridge Sixth Form closure. The Corporate Director said he would check this and respond to her.

In response to a question from the Chair as to the recent consultation on Early Years Funding, the Corporate Director advised that he was not aware of the number of responses, but this consultation is usually well responded to.

The Chair thanked the Corporate Director for what he has done during the last five years in engaging with this Committee. The Corporate Director said he had found the scrutiny process supportive yet challenging.

## **252 Reflections and the future**

### **Considered:-**

A report by the Chair, which outlined the work carried out by the Committee during the life of the current County Council. It also suggested a “long list” of Items that those Members who form the Committee, following the County Council Elections in May 2022, may wish to consider for inclusion in its Work Programme.

The Chair commented that much ground has been covered by the Committee over the last five years. She was pleased with the work undertaken by the Committee on Elective Home Education - where the Local Authority can talk to parents before they

decide they want to home educate - and on Exclusions, including the ladders of intervention.

The Chair felt that the Committee's work had been carried out in a collective way, putting politics to one side. Members had put the interests of children and young people first.

The number of Co-opted Members had dropped, so it is good to see two new Co-opted Members have now been appointed.

The Chair referred to the "long list" of potential Items that had been appended to her report. If Members feel anything needs to be added they should let her or Patrick Duffy know. She felt that working with the Local Government Association's Children's Board could be an area to be included in the Work Programme.

She thanked the Corporate Director for helping the Committee to take matters forward and expressed her gratitude to Members and officers, past and present, for their support and contribution - including the Vice-Chair, Councillor Gillian Quinn, Councillor Stephanie Duckett, Political Group Spokesperson, Councillor Annabel Wilkinson, as Young People's Champion, and the Portfolio Holders - Councillors Janet Sanderson and Patrick Mulligan.

Councillor Cliff Lunn commented that the Committee had done good work in the area of Elective Home Education. The Corporate Director had followed through on points raised and there is good oversight.

Councillor Val Arnold thanked everyone for what they do for children and young people, as they are our future.

David Sharp thanked the Committee for involving the Voluntary Sector in an inclusive way.

**253. Other business which the Chair agrees should be considered as a matter of urgency because of special circumstances**

There was no urgent business.

The meeting concluded at 11.35 a.m.

PD