

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

20 JULY 2022

STATEMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Medium Term Financial Strategy & Beyond 2020

The Directorate continues to face a number of financial pressures arising from an increase in the number of children and young people assessed as requiring an Education, Health and Care Plan. Demand for SEN support and requests for statutory assessments continue to rise resulting in increased SEN casework and psychological assessments. The number of children attracting financial support into their education setting continues to increase with particular financial pressure arising from the costs associated with independent and non-maintained special schools. SEN Transport costs are also expected to rise through both demand and inflationary pressures. We continue to lobby for fairer high needs funding for both revenue and capital funding.

Although this information appears in my Statement to Council it should be noted that both Executive Members for the Children and Young People's Service have joint responsibility for all relevant resources.

Corporate Parenting Members' Group

I am pleased to report that the 2022 Annual Report of the Group is available [for download here](#). The report reflects our work as "corporate parents" over the past year and I would urge Member colleagues to take time to read the document.

Independent Review of Children's Social Care

On 23 May 2022 the independent review of children's social care published its final report '[The independent review of children's social care: final report](#)'. Government is expected to publish its response later this year.

The review's focus is the need to create a system that provides intensive help to families in crisis, acts decisively in response to abuse, unlocks the potential of wider family networks to raise children, puts lifelong loving relationships at the heart of the care system and lays the foundations for a good life for those who have been in care. Nationally, what we have currently is a system increasingly skewed to crisis intervention, with outcomes for children that continue to be unacceptably poor and costs that continue to rise. For these reasons, the review recommends that a radical reset is now unavoidable.

We are well placed in North Yorkshire to embrace any recommendations and much of the nationally described practice changes are based on Good and Outstanding Local Authorities such as here.

SEND Green Paper: "right support, right place, right time"

This Government consultation published on 29 March seeks views on possible changes to the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and alternative provision (AP) system in England. The overall aim is to create a more inclusive education system with local mainstream

provision which will improve the experience and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and those who need alternative provision. Key proposals include:

- National standards around how needs should be identified and assessed
- Standardised processes for assessing and reviewing support
- Inclusion dashboards providing a local and national picture of how the system is performing
- Statutory SEND Multi agency Partnerships led by the local authority and made up of representatives from 0-25 education sector, health, care, and youth justice
- Changes to decision making and process in relation to Education Health and Care Plans including the introduction of a digital EHCP system
- New national framework of banding and price tariffs, matched to levels of need and types of education provision set out in the national standards

The consultation closes on 22 July.

Children & Families Performance

Overall, North Yorkshire's Children & Families Service continues to perform strongly, although demand for services remain high. Over the first Quarter of 2022/23, 1,175 referrals have been received. Whilst this is down from the 10-year high of 1,300 in the same Quarter last year, it remains higher than the quarterly average over 2018/19 and 2019/20. With sustained demand, it is encouraging to see that the timeliness of assessments remains strong at 98.2%.

During Quarter 1, 108 children became subject to a Child Protection Plan (compared to 129 in Quarter 4 and 135 in Quarter 3), bringing the total number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan to 415. This is an increase of 39 compared to 376 at the end of Quarter 1 2021/22, but a reduction from 433 at the end of March 2022.

The number of Children in Care remains relatively stable at 428, up by just one at the end of 2021/22. Of this, 315 (73.6%) are living with an NYCC registered foster carer, including 134 living with a friend or relative foster carer. There are still challenges with Dental Checks and immunisations, which the service is working hard to address.

Looking forward, as inflation continues to increase and further price increases are just over the horizon, it is likely that we will continue to see demand for frontline services increase.

Support to Afghan and Ukrainian Families

We continue to support families who have arrived in North Yorkshire from Afghanistan and, more recently, Ukraine.

Afghan families in the bridging hotels at Scarborough and Selby are being prioritised for housing and four families have been given permanent homes in North Yorkshire. Schooling is being provided to 115 children through full time education and 1:1 tuition for those pupils who arrived after their year group (Y11 & Y13) had left full-time education for study leave. We still have not received confirmation from the DfE about the education funding that will be provided to the children in the bridging hotels.

There are also 140 individuals seeking refugee status seeking located at another hotel in Scarborough including 46 school-age children residing there, of whom 36 are in full-time education. The LA was originally advised by the Home Office and Mears AAC that these young people would be in North Yorkshire for fewer than 30 days and would not need access to education. As the situation has evolved, Early Help has begun regular visits to the hotel to support parents with school applications, and many of these are in progress. The refugee council now provides regular support across all three hotels, meaning that our Early Help Service have now reduced the intensity of support.

The Service have also been undertaking welfare and welcome visits to the sponsors and guests under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Once a sponsor has expressed interest and has matched with a Ukrainian guest or family, Early Help and Housing in the relevant District undertake a welfare visit to those who are intending to sponsor a family with a child under the age of 18 (those who are matched with individuals or families with no children are visited by colleagues from HAS). The purpose of these visits is to ascertain the suitability of the accommodation, offer advice and information to the sponsor, and initiate a DBS check on all adults who reside in the property (or on the sponsor only, if the guests are to reside in separate accommodation from the sponsor). Once the family have arrived, Early Help undertake a further (welcome) visit to check that the guest family are settled and happy, and to offer them information and advice.

As of 29 June, we have conducted welfare visits to 252 sponsors, and welcome visits to 125 families (including 268 children). Many of the sponsors have started the school admissions processes prior to the family arriving, and Early Help have supported this where necessary. On the few occasions where concerns have been raised about the accommodation or the suitability of the sponsors, this has been escalated to an oversight group to decide whether the match should go ahead or whether to look for a re-match with another local sponsor.

Celebrating You Event

Following the pandemic we were extremely pleased to meet in person for the Annual Celebration Event on 11th July. The Celebrate You event saw 250 staff from across Children and Young People Services come together to share their excellent practice and honour work colleagues who they feel have continued to go above and beyond over the last 12 months. The event saw the presentation of awards across 12 categories including both individual and team awards including Sparkling Moment, Apprentice of the Year and Practitioner of the Year in memory of our colleague Wendy Atkinson.

Sector Lead Improvement work (SLIP)

The SLIP programme has continued to be active this quarter. Support work has been undertaken with East Riding Council focusing on a range of practice areas including supervision and court processes. Work with Stoke has been completed supporting them to develop their edge of care services. Stoke have asked for NYCC to support a further piece of work and this will be undertaken in coming months. This quarter has seen multiple inquiries from Cumbria, North East Lincolnshire, Redcar & Cleveland, Durham and Stockton with initial scoping meetings completed. Demand for edge of care work has increased over this quarter with many enquires being made about the No Wrong Door approach.

Strengthening Families, Protecting Children Programme (SFPC)

Work under the Department for Education's SFPC programme continues to progress well and all of the innovator projects are up and running.

On 14 and 15 June the DfE hosted a national learning event for the SFPC programme and No Wrong Door was well represented across a range of different sessions across the two days. It is reported that there were over 600 tickets distributed for the whole event, however we are awaiting the actual breakdown of the figures as to who attended the No Wrong Door sessions. Initial feedback has been positive with it being reported that 38% of those providing feedback on the event were interested in learning more about No Wrong Door. This was the highest percentage share of three innovators within SFPC programme.

We are entering the final stages of the programme for Middlesbrough (August 2022) and Rochdale (November 2022) and we are working to move towards their programme shut down and evaluating their progress through the programme.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR JANET SANDERSON