

# NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

NOVEMBER 2022

## STATEMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER

### Medium Term Financial Strategy – November 2022

Demand and cost pressures continue to place upward pressure on spending within the Directorate, particularly in relation to services for children and young people assessed as requiring an Education, Health and Care Plan. Pressure on available places within special schools and volatility in the care market continue to remain as financial risks. Home to School transport costs also continue to rise resulting from increases in demand for SEN transport but also through price pressures as contracts are re-procured.

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.

### Children & Families

**Performance** across Children & Families Service remains strong against the backdrop of sustained high levels of demand. Q2 2022/23 saw a 29% increase in the number of contacts screened by the MAST compared to last year, with the highest number of contacts screened since Q3 2018/19. This increase has been reflected in referrals, with over 1,200 referrals to Children's Social Care, 26% higher than the four-year average for Quarter 2. Whilst there has been an increase in the number of families referred to social care for a second or subsequent time in 12 months, at 18.9%, this remains considerably lower than the national average of 22.7%. Despite increasing demand, children, young people and their families continue to receive the support they need in a timely way.

**Support to Afghan and Ukraine Families.** We continue to support families who have arrived in North Yorkshire from Afghanistan and, more recently, Ukraine. Children & Families Early Help Service continue to offer support to Afghan families. From July to October, we provided support to complete 90 children's school applications and arranged weekly ESOL sessions for 8 young people aged between 16-18 year olds. Library Outreach visits were arranged to enrol families and encourage participation in summer activities. 14 young people aged between 12 & 16 years also accessed various activities through the FEAST programme.

**Early Help Service** continues to undertake welfare and welcome visits to the sponsors and guests under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. As of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022, Early Help have completed welfare visits to 319 sponsors and welcome visits to 296 families with 394 children.

**Virtual School** held their annual graduation on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2022 to celebrate the success of our young people completing their GCSE's, A 'Levels and proud moments. I was delighted to presented the certificates to those that were able to attend. The day was a great success with young people, carers, families and practitioners coming together to listen and watch videos of their accomplishments. A celebration meal was held at Allerton Court Hotel, which was a great opportunity to finally come together face to face and listen informally to the voice of young people and their carers.

**Care Leavers** The care leavers annual Conference was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2022 hosted by York University who continue to support North Yorkshire Care Leavers. The day was a great success, with workshops on raps, graffiti design, energy doctor advice and bingo sessions. Jenna Downing, world skating champion came to give a motivational talk. Care Leavers received free hot water bottles and beautiful patchwork quilts, to keep warm in the winter months. Cllr Goodrick (Chairman of the Corporate Parent Member' Group) presented awards to celebrate the success of young people throughout the year.

As we move into a unitary authority, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023, we will be able to provide assistance with Council Tax to certain persons who are leaving care. The council as corporate parent, want to support care leavers, by granting a discretionary reduction in Council Tax liability.

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### **Local Area Partnership SEND Strategy**

Following significant engagement with parents/carers and key stakeholders the new partnership SEND Strategy (0-25 years) is in its final stages. It specifies how we will work together on priorities for development over the next 3 years to improve outcomes for children and young people. This strategy is complementary to the SEND Strategic Plan for Education Provision and includes a focus on preparation for adulthood and independence including employment, transitions and joint commissioning together with achieving best value across the High Needs Budget. The Strategy will transition through executive and will be presented to council for final approval in February 2023.

### **Social Care support for Disabled children and their families**

Following the completion of the review of social care support for Disabled Children and their families which scrutinised the support available for families with disabled children across the children's social care workforce, the first two work streams have been established to

- Develop an annual workforce training programme for all roles within social care to raise knowledge and understanding of disability and its impact on families and their support needs
- Review the criteria for eligibility and support for families from specialist disabled children's services.

A Short Breaks Manager has also recently been appointed as the responsible individual for the Children's Resource Centres and she will be establishing a further work stream to review

the Short Breaks offer across North Yorkshire to address the lack of provision in certain areas and to stimulate the market to attract more providers to delivery short breaks

**Sector Led Improvement Programme SLIP (formerly PIP)** work continues with requests for Edge of Care support from the North West Director of Children's Services group during Q2. Work continues with Cumbria and East Riding. Future work is planned with Redcar and Cleveland, Barnsley and extension work with East Riding in respect of fostering work, quality of practice and performance.

**Strengthening Families, Protecting Children Programme (SFPC)** The programme continues to progress well. All but one No Wrong Door (NWD) hub's are fully operational and this is in the process of being registered with Ofsted and beginning to accept children into the residential home. Middlesbrough have now ended their time on the programme and Rochdale's programme will be ending on 30<sup>th</sup> November. Each of these programmes have delivered positively against the SPFC outcomes and we have seen a reduction in the number of children in care across the two sites, which has contributed to significant cost avoidance/saving for these LA's.

Some early implementation analysis was completed by What Works Centre at the 3 month stage after implementation which shows positive initial findings for No Wrong Door across SFPC LA's. We are awaiting a further report 12 months post implementation.

We are continuing to work closely with the DfE and have hosted visits to Middlesbrough and Rochdale alongside DfE colleagues in October. Some DfE representation on the day of the Middlesbrough visit were involved in the preparation of the implementation strategy for the Independent Review of Children's Social Care and it was demonstrated to them how No Wrong Door links closely with the proposed outcomes. The SFPC programme continues to be delivered within budget.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR JANET SANDERSON