

North Yorkshire County Council

Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 2nd September 2022 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: County Councillor Barbara Brodigan (Chair)

County Councillors: Alyson Baker, Stephanie Duckett, Bridget Fortune, George Jabbour (substituting for Councillor Tom Jones), Paul Haslam (substituting for Councillor John Mann) Nathan Hull, David Jeffels, Janet Jefferson, Cliff Lunn, Heather Phillips (Vice-Chair), John Ritchie, Dave Whitfield and Peter Wilkinson.

Co-opted Members: Tom Cavell-Taylor (Parent Governor Representative), Andrew Smith (Church of England) and David Watson (Voluntary Sector)

Officers: Stuart Carlton, Corporate Director - Children and Young People's Service, Patrick Duffy, Principal Democratic Services Scrutiny Officer, Ali Firby, Child Death Review Officer, North Yorkshire and York. Judith Russ, Head of Placement Support and Stuart Williams, Senior Contracts and Commissioning Officer

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tom Jones, John Mann, Kirsty Poskitt and Mike Schofield and Co-opted Members Emma Higgins and David Sharp and Portfolio Holders, County Councillor Janet Sanderson (Executive Member for Children and Young People) and County Councillor Annabel Wilkinson (Executive Member for Education and Skills)

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

12. Welcome and apologies

Councillor Barbara Brodigan thanked Members for having appointed her as Chair and looked forward to working with everyone.

She welcomed people to the meeting and Members introduced themselves.

13. Minutes of the meeting held on 24th June 2022

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 24th June 2022, be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

14 Any Declarations of Interest

There were none.

15. Public Questions

There were no public questions or statements.

16. Chair's Remarks

The Chair reported that she had attended the Executive on 23rd August, along with other Chairs of Scrutiny Committees. She had asked two questions. One concerned Free School Meals for families outside of the eligibility criteria. Although only 73% are entitled to take up, work is on-going and a good deal of online support and advice is available.

She had also enquired about Secondary School attendance levels - which is 87% across the county - and what is being done to help children who are being home educated. The attendance level is improving all the time. It does not include children who are being home educated, but a growing number of parents are now choosing to return their children to School.

The Chair also referred to the fact that there has been a drop in custodial sentences, which is welcome news.

17 Young Carers

Considered -

A presentation by Judith Russ, Head of Placement Support and Stuart Williams, Senior Contracts and Commissioning Officer.

As part of the presentation, there were two video clips shown. The first was about Ellie, a young carer, aged 11. The second was a young carer's song, by Charlotte.

The presentation is available [Here](#) and covered a wide range of areas, including:-

- Definition of a young carer
- The Local Authority's statutory duties
- Service delivery
- Aims of the Young Carers Service
- Data on numbers
- Emotional and mental health of young carers
- What young carers worry about
- Identification of young carers
- Awareness raising
- Referral and assessment
- Partnership Working
- Feedback
- Examples of clubs and activities available

The following points were highlighted, in particular:-

- A young carer is defined as someone aged 18 and under who cares for a friend or family member who, due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction, cannot cope without their support.
- The Young Carers and Adult Carers Support Service is an all age service delivered by a single provider in four localities. This provides a number of benefits, such as a clear cohesive offer to carers and closer collaboration between Service Providers.
- There are estimated to be 1,107 young carers, aged 0 to 15 and 2,426 aged 16 to 24 according to the 2011 census). There is no, one, agreed model with regards to the predicted prevalence of Young Carers in the population, a common ratio of 1:12 is often used as an indicator. This could mean that, potentially, there may be as many as 6,657 Young Carers in North Yorkshire.

- Emotional and mental health is a major concern among young carers. The Growing up in North Yorkshire Bi-Annual Survey received 16,000 responses in 2020. Young Carers worry about a range of matters such as family; the way they look; examinations; school-work problems; and falling out with friends.
- Young carers are referred from multifarious sources and can self-refer.
- Awareness raising takes place in a number of ways to ensure people are aware of the service. This includes sessions delivered to professionals in Schools, Community Groups and the Voluntary Sector and communication with Schools. As part of this, an example of a leaflet, targeted at young carers, has been developed – *DO I LOOK LIKE I CARE?* The aim is to make communications such as this interesting and exciting to young carers.
- The referral and assessment process was outlined.
- Partnership working is crucial, with the Young Carers Service providing a *whole family approach* which focuses on the young carer and their family.
- The Young Carers Service acts on feedback from young carers. For example, in response to the view that more support is needed at School, a number of School Hubs have been developed, where young carers can drop in to see a Young Carer Advisor on a lunch time. These are proving to be successful and the Directorate hope to expand their provision.
- Examples of the types of clubs and activities that are available across the county were provided. The Craven Budz and uTime Groups will now meet fortnightly, rather than monthly.
- Many platforms for feedback exist - including Youth Council and Carers Focus Groups. In addition, Schools are increasingly becoming involved in feedback, which the Directorate values and welcomes.
- In terms of transition from being a young carer to an adult carer, the fact that the service is now an all age service will make the transition easier to manage.

The Chair and Members thanked Judith and Stuart for their interesting and comprehensive presentation.

The following questions/comments were made by Members:-

- The Chair asked, in view of the data not being up-to-date, how confident officers are that young carers are being identified and not *going under the radar*? Stuart Williams responded that the Service is always attempting to broaden its reach, but some carers will choose not to engage. Resources will be put into getting to those young carers.
- The Chair also referred to the large increase in numbers - was this due to the success of awareness raising; outreach work; or other factors? Judith Russ stated that it is a combination of factors. It is a positive that young carers are declaring themselves as carers.
- Co-opted Member, David Watson, mentioned that North Yorkshire Arts are working with MIND to help pre-empt difficulties. Judith Russ stressed the importance of School attendance – if children are in School it is more likely that issues will be picked up.

- Councillor David Jeffels felt that there is a potential hidden problem, as some young people do not want to say they are carers. Can more be done to access young carers through GP Surgeries; Head Teachers, etc? Members would be happy to help in whatever way they could. Stuart Williams acknowledged that some young people do not want to say they are a carer. Therefore, the Service strives to make it a positive experience to overcome these perceptions.
- Councillor Cliff Lunn wondered if it could be the case that we are using young carers to provide services that we, as an Authority, should be providing? Judith Russ advised that it is important that adults are assessed so that they are aware of the help that is available to them. However, no service can fill all of the gaps.
- Councillor Stephanie Duckett commented that Selby seems to have very few clubs and activities compared to other areas. Yes, there are services available in Selby, but these are predominantly in the town centre. How do young people get into town to access these? Stuart Williams acknowledged that there had been a gap in provision during the procurement exercise, but activities are now in place. Providers do provide taxis and workers car share, but the Directorate is mindful of transport issues. In some cases, the money raised by the providers' fundraising activities is used for transport purposes.
- A Member felt that the Directorate should affirm to all types of School, particularly Academies, that they have a responsibility to young carers as well.
- Councillor John Ritchie wanted to know how effective partnership working is. For example, are we meeting the needs of young people's emotional and mental health? Also, when will the latest GUNY Survey be published? Stuart Williams confirmed that partnerships are working well; the fact that we are seeing more young people come forward is an encouraging sign. Judith Russ added that the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) plays a key role and there are other sources of support and signposting that are available prior to CAMHS.

The Corporate Director, Stuart Carlton, made the following points by way of clarification/assistance to the Committee on the questions above:-

- The needs of young carers are being met – Council staff, providers and other partners are doing a good job.
- The new service will be monitored.
- The Committee received an in-depth presentation on mental health at its February meeting. Recently appointed Members, in particular, might find this a useful reference point – he will arrange for it to be circulated.
- The Bi-Annual GUNY Survey (undertaken this year) is usually available in the autumn – he will check that is to be the case this year.
- Councillor Paul Haslam felt that data is critical to ascertain accurately the number of young carers. Support from Schools, in the form of blended learning, possibly, might assist. Is it an inclusivity issue? Stuart Carlton clarified that the number of young carers identified from other sources is coming out within the range that the Directorate is aware of.

- Councillor Nathan Hull commented that it looks like a lot of good work is occurring with young carers in a group setting but, for many young people, the thought of attending a group is not appealing. What is on offer for those children? In addition, there is a funding gap for the economic welfare of young carers - so where does the money come from? Judith Russ responded that the assessment process identifies whether group activities are appropriate. In terms of finance, the Income Maximisation Team is utilised. If specific support is required, the family can be referred to the Social Work Service.
- Councillor Alyson Baker asked whether, with the cost of living crisis, there is increased support for carers? Stuart Williams advised that families are helped to access support by signposting them to the support available.
- Co-opted Member, Dr. Tom Cavell-Taylor, asked whether there is back up data on how effective the service has been so that we could follow up with young carers, when they are older, how the support helped them? Stuart Williams said he was not aware of longitudinal research but he will find out if there is any available. The service does, of course, receive feedback direct from carers at the time.
- On funding distribution, Councillor Heather Phillips enquired how large needs are addressed and whether home education complicates the task faced by officers? Stuart Carlton advised that there is flexibility of funding within each provider area. He reminded Members that every parent has the right to request that their child be educated at home. His Directorate monitor it and meet with the parents to discuss, so that they have all the information upon which to take a decision. He will ascertain if any young carers are home educated and the suitability of that education.
- Councillor Peter Wilkinson felt there might be a number of carers who we are not aware of. Stuart Carlton was confident that the figures are about right. Furthermore, the Directorate does everything it can to promote awareness.
- Co-opted Member, Andrew Smith, mentioned the attainment of young carers. It is important to ensure that caring does not have a detrimental effect on their education.
- Councillor George Jabbour referred to the age profile of young carers across Districts, which is consistent for those between 0-15, but varies markedly between the ages of 16-24, with significant variation in Richmondshire.
- Councillor Jabbour also sought clarification as to how the 1:12 ratio was reached. Stuart Williams confirmed that there is no one set Indicator; we apply this ratio as it is most commonly used. That is where the figure of approximately 6,000 carers in the County emanates from. He will delve further into the District figures.
- Councillor Janet Jefferson commented that attendance at Secondary Schools has reduced and there are a higher number of carers in Secondary Schools. How many carers became carers during the Pandemic and is there enough support to young carers to enable them to go to events? The Corporate Director said that there is no evidence that attendance levels are linked to caring.

The Chair concluded the discussion by reiterating her thanks to officers for an informative presentation and responding to Members questions.

18. Child Death Overview Panel – Annual Report 2021/2022

Considered:-

A summary of the afore-mentioned Annual Report by Ali Firby, Child Death Review Officer for North Yorkshire and York.

The Annual Report had been circulated with the Agenda for the meeting.

Ali Firby highlighted the following points, in particular:-

- It is a statutory requirement to have a Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP).
- The Panel follows national guidance set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.
- The Panel review each child's death and, where it is possible to do so, learns from them to help prevent further deaths.
- All cases are anonymised.
- In the period concerned, there were 38 child deaths notified to the CDOP.
- 47% of the children notified were under one year old.
- The majority of deaths (87%) notified occurred within a Hospital Trust setting.
- In North Yorkshire, a greater proportion of the child deaths were female – nationally, the proportion is higher among males.
- Table 5 of the report highlighted the categories of death.
- The Panel's work is informed by a Joint Agency Response meeting that is held within a few days of the child's death. These meetings are well attended with good engagement. One of the issues considered is support to the family.

The Panel meets six times per year and reviewed 29 cases in 2021/2022. Five of these cases (17%) were found to have modifiable factors – that is, if action could be taken, this might help to prevent future child deaths – for instance, smoking within pregnancy.

The two principal achievements of the Panel in 2021/2022 related to Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI) Prevention and Suicide Prevention. The former included the development of the SUDI "Prevent and Protect Model" and awareness campaign, with a strapline *Day or Night, Sleep Right*. In terms of Suicide Prevention, initiatives included having contacted Schools, Colleges and Further Education settings, outlining the action that can be taken within their own organisation.

Priorities for 2022/2023 are:-

- Exploring and developing the role of the Key Worker.
- Ensuring greater awareness of the What 3 Words App Campaign.
- An audit of cases to establish any themes, patterns or trends in relation to Neonatal twin deaths, given the increase locally

Members raised a number of questions/comments as follows:-

- Councillor Nathan Hull asked if there are any patterns among the 17% of deaths that had modifiable factors? Ali Firby advised that there are no patterns. Although she cannot provide details of the factors identified in these cases, as it may make them identifiable, she explained some examples of modifiable factors, which include unsafe sleeping practices; parents smoking during pregnancy; maternal obesity; alcohol use and supervision.
- Councillor Cliff Lunn remarked that, over the years, advice as to safe sleeping had altered several times. Is there now an agreed position? Ali Firby stated that the Panel is guided by research from the Lullaby Trust. There are conflicting messages from social media influencers. Therefore, professionals deliver the same, consistent messages and parents are encouraged to take advice from a professional.
- In response to a question from Councillor Heather Phillips, relating to Police Family Liaison Officers and whether CDOP had any issues with their reporting into the CDOP, Ali Firby confirmed the cases who are allocated a Family Liaison Officer are few and far between. They do not directly report into the CDOP - it is the Senior Investigating Officer who would do this and Ali Firby has experienced no issues in terms of their reporting.

The Chair thanked Ali for her presentation.

19. Work Programme

Considered:-

A report by the Principal Democratic Services Scrutiny Officer, which invited Members to consider the Committee's Work Programme for 2022/2023, taking into account the outcome of discussions on previous Agenda Items and any other developments taking place across the county.

He highlighted the following:-

- The Committee has a fairly full looking Agenda for its next meeting in December 2022, comprising the Independent Scrutineer's Report on the work of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board; the Annual Report of One Adoption, North and Humber; and a financial update in respect of the Children and Young People's Service Directorate.
- Councillor Paul Haslam had contacted him to suggest a number of Items for inclusion in the Work Programme. The usual process would be for these to be considered by the Chair, Vice-Chair and Political Group Spokespersons at the Mid Cycle Briefing. The Chair confirmed that this would be the case.

Resolved –

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

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

There was none.

The meeting concluded at 12.10 p.m.

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