

## **NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**22 FEBRUARY 2023**

### **STATEMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

#### **Performance of Statutory Assessment and Education, Health and Care Plans**

The local authority continues to experience a significant increase in the numbers of requests for statutory assessment for SEND. There were 979 requests received in the 2022 calendar year, an increase of 32% (+240) from the previous year and reflects increasing challenges for schools and settings to meet the needs of children and young people at SEN Support.

Completion of assessments within the statutory 20 week timescale is now showing some consistent improvement and currently stands at 44.8% during 2023 which is comparable to the national average. Significant work is underway to ensure this progress continues and performance continues to build to pre pandemic levels.

#### **Development of the SEND Strategic Plan for Education Provision**

The current Plan comes to an end in September 2023 and initial engagement is now underway with all key stakeholders to ensure their views are considered in terms of priority areas for development/ transformation in educational provision for SEND across early years, schools, AP and post 16 provision over the next 3 years

This Plan is complementary to the Local Area SEND Strategy and will include a focus on early years, schools and post 16 settings across universal, targeted and specialist provision.

#### **Social Care Support for Disabled Children and Their Families**

A working group is currently reviewing the eligibility criteria for Specialist Disabled Children's Service. This group started in September 2022 and has proposed some minor changes to the wording of the criteria and how it is implemented. Work has been completed across Disabled Children's Service and Children and Family Service to review implications for caseloads and four early engagement sessions have been held with parents/carers re the work so far. Feedback has been gathered from these sessions and will help shape the plans for formal consultation.

#### **Delivering Better Value**

North Yorkshire has joined the DfE Better Value Programme which has been developed to support 55 local authorities with significant deficits to reform their high needs systems and address their high needs deficits.

Phase 1 of the programme will involve a diagnostic analysis of SEND and the high needs block budget in North Yorkshire, followed by the development of an implementation plan which specified how key areas identified in Phase 1 will be addressed over a specified timescale. Once the implementation plan gains approval by DfE, one off grant funding of £1million will be released to support the delivery of the implementation plan and associated transformation. North Yorkshire is within Tranche 3 of local authority groupings which goes live in July 2023.

## **Local Area/CQC SEND Inspection**

The new local area SEND Inspection was launched in January 2023 to assess 2 main areas:

The impact of the local area partnership's SEND arrangements on the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND:

How local area partners work together to plan, evaluate and develop the SEND system:

It is important to stress that the inspection is a partnership inspection which includes 0-25 providers, education, health and care and takes place over a 3 week period. It is anticipated that the inspection for North Yorkshire is imminent as the last inspection was undertaken in 2016 under the former framework.

## **Children & Families**

Children & families performance continues to remain strong against a sustained backdrop of on-going demand. Over the 9 months of 2022/23 to 31st December, over 17,000 contacts have been received, an increase of 15% to the same period of 2021/22. This is feeding through to very high demand for help from Children Social Care, with contacts exceeding 1,200 for the 3rd time in the last 5 years, with the number of referrals exceeding the quarterly average by 13%.

Despite this demand, we continue to see timely support provided, with 98% of assessments completed within 45 days. As pressures build on families facing increases in the cost-of-living, we are also seeing an increase in the number of children in care, adding to the pressures presented by the significant rise in unaccompanied asylum seeking children. We continue to meet demand through internally provided places, with approximately 3 in every 4 children in care living with a North Yorkshire foster carer.

## **Youth Justice**

The official data for the 12 months ending June 2022 showed a further significant decrease in the rate of FTE's into the criminal justice system in North Yorkshire. The rate decreased by 24%, from 154 per 100,000 of the 10-17 population in the 12 months ending March 2022 to 114 per 100k in the 12 months ending June 2022. The rate of 114 per 100k relates to 64 young people and places North Yorkshire towards the top of the 2nd Quartile nationally.

50 fewer young people have entered the criminal justice system for the first time when compared to the same period 12 months earlier.

The recent significant improvement in the rate of custodial sentences in North Yorkshire has continued with no custodial sentences received by young people in the 12 months ending September 2022, compared to 26 custodial sentences received in the 12 months to September 2018

## **Creative Engagement Youth Voice Team**

In Quarter 3 the Youth Voice Team launched their Amplify programme for care experienced children and young people, working with a creative practitioner to increase confidence and help children and young people have their voices heard through creative writing workshops.

The team held locality based Christmas parties for children in care, where each young person received a handmade Christmas stocking filled with chocolates and treats.

Quarter 3 also saw our Members of Youth Parliament attend the Youth Sitting at the Houses of Parliament, with Brando, MYP for the West addressing a packed chamber on his campaign around diversity and inclusion.

### **Early Help Service - Homes for Ukraine**

The MIST (Minority Inclusion Support Team) joined Early Help on 1st November 2022, and all 6 staff are now in post. Funding from the Homes for Ukraine scheme has enabled the recruitment of an additional Practice Supervisor and 8 Children and Families Intervention workers, and an additional two Children and Families support workers within the MIST team. The MIST and HFU team within Early Help are developing ways of working more closely together, to provide a comprehensive package of support for all refugee families.

Early Help Service continues to undertake welfare and welcome visits to the sponsors and guests under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

### **Virtual School**

The team has supported the newly arrived UASC young people with English tutoring, provided chromebooks and an ESOL Learning package through an online package called NIMBL.

Each young person can access this on any device such as their phone but also use it in college and school with their teachers, it records the use and send a report to Virtual School.

Another new project is the Guidance Personal Education Plan for care experienced children, adopted/special guardianship and child arrangement order. The PEP document has been trialled in schools this term and will be formally launched in February. This project was a consultative piece of work with adoptive parents, special guardians and the schools throughout the design process. Initial responses are very positive and comments received suggest it provides guidance and a holistic view of the needs of the child.

**Care Leavers** had their annual Christmas lunches, kindly funded from councillor locality budgets. There were over 60 young people sharing a meal together with staff and councillors in the 4 team areas. These get togethers are now part of regular programme of group sessions run in each locality area. The sessions are young people directed, and often involve partners from a range of agencies contributing to the events, for instance adult learning and Northallerton Digi hub who are helping to develop our supportive care experienced community across the county.



### **Sector Led Improvement Programme SLIP (formerly PIP)**

Q3 has seen work continue with East Riding and NWD in Cumbria. The work with Cumbria will conclude in Q4 and they are considering if there is further extension work they would like to apply for. East Riding requested extension work regarding fostering for Q4 and this has been scoped and approved. In addition, during Q3 set up meetings and approvals have been designed and finalised for work with Redcar and Cleveland, relating to practice model development; Barnsley, in respect of edge of care and NWD work. This commenced in December, and both were approved by the Department for Education and will continue into Q4. The 5-day extension work with Stoke has been completed in Q3 with only an attendance at their NWD steering groups outstanding for Q4. Enquiries continue to be received in respect of edge of care and NWD work

### **Strengthening Families, Protecting Children Programme (SFPC)**

The programme continues to progress well. All but one No Wrong Door (NWD) hubs 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 SFPC 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.

### **Medium Term Financial Strategy – February 2023**

High Needs financial pressures have continued to present a financial challenge to the Directorate. This has been a national trend stemming from the unfunded increase in the number of children assessed as requiring EHCPs following the implementation of SEND legislative reforms in 2014. The local authority will be engaging with the Department for

Education's Delivering Better Value in SEND programme as part of Tranche 3 from April 2023.

Despite the December announcement of an additional £3.3m from the Department for Education, the scale and pace of the financial pressure exceeds this allocation and we will continue to lobby the Department for additional recurring funding and reform of the distribution methodology.

Savings and transformation proposals totalling nearly £5.7m are included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy covering the period 2023 through to 2026.

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.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR JANET SANDERSON