

North Yorkshire County Council
Children and Young People's Service
Corporate Directors Meeting with Executive Members

7 March 2023

**Request to accept grant funding for the Information use Project Care leavers:
Nuffield Foundation Research Project**

1.0 Purpose of report

This report is to request that the executive members for Children and Young People, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Service, the Corporate Director Strategic Resources and the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) authorise the Corporate Director Strategic Resources to accept the grant offer from the Nuffield Foundation facilitated/managed by Oxford University, which will be used to explore the benefits of an enhanced data set in respect to Care leavers, 'The Information Use project'. This is a five-year research project concluding in 2026 (commenced October 2021).

Children and Young People's Service were approached by Dr Lisa Holmes of the Rees Centre to become a site partner for this research focusing on care leavers and improving their outcomes. NYCC is a site partner as is Hampshire County Council, focusing on data science, Greater Manchester focusing on 0–5-year-olds health outcomes.

We have been successful in becoming a site partner and this was confirmed in 2021. Year one focused on scoping for the research and ethical approval from Oxford University being granted, (this is pending and hoping to be secured by October 2023 the end of year two). The research cannot commence until ethical approval is secured

Executive Summary

This report is to request that the executive members for Children and Young People, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Service, the Corporate Director Strategic Resources and the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) authorise the Corporate Director Strategic Resources to accept the grant offer from the Nuffield Foundation facilitated/managed by Oxford University, which will be used to explore the benefits of an enhanced data set in respect to Care leavers, 'The Information Use project'. This is a five-year research project concluding in 2026 (commenced October 2021).

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We have been successful in becoming a site partner and this was confirmed in 2021. Year one focused on scoping for the research and ethical approval from Oxford University being granted, (this is pending and hoping to be secured by October 2023 the end of year two). The research cannot commence until ethical approval is secured.

The amount awarded is £135,000 To be used to fund a part time data person for year two to five of the project and this grant can be released once the ethical approval has been granted and the data aspects of the research can commence

2.0 Issues

The primary aim of the research is to improve the outcomes and experience of children and families through the integration progress on 5 practices

The supplementary aims of the research are to:

1. Increase public acceptance of ethical uses of data, reduce the use of unethical approaches and support improvements to national datasets and use of data and evidence.
2. Make impactful recommendations for national policy and practice in child and family social policy by sharing learning from bottom up policy development.
3. Improve academic theory and evidence on implementation and policy issues in child and family social policy.

Objectives

- Set up a high-quality information use project in each Local Site
- Iteratively improve and integrate activity in the 5 practices in each information use project
- Work with a Learning Network of 20 LAs, using an action learning approach structured around the 5 practices, in a Community of Practice, grouped by local priority. 'Stress-test' knowledge, materials and approaches developed by the Local Sites. Co-produce new knowledge and solutions.
- Produce resources for wider impact. Define and develop a set of transferable approaches that are adopted much more widely
- Evaluative learning. Develop and apply inter-disciplinary mixed methods of research and analysis to evaluate, review and monitor our own practices and the impacts, methods, costs and potential benefits of information use.
- Provide opportunities for other LAs, charities, academics and national policy makers to share and apply lessons learned.

Aims for evaluative learning

- Primary Hypothesis: to test whether by improving interaction, dialogue and common understanding across the 5 practices we can support local authorities to reduce inequalities, improve outcomes and experiences, and improve cost effectiveness.

- Test and Learn: to assess the value for money of Information Use Projects in the 3 Learning Sites at each of 3 stages of development from Pilot to Full Implementation and of Learning Network participation
- Wider impact: to test whether we have been successful in meeting our aims to:
 - Increase public acceptance of ethical uses of data, reduce the use of unethical approaches and support improvements to national datasets and use of data and evidence
 - Make impactful recommendations for national policy and practice in child and family social policy by sharing learning from bottom up policy development
 - Improve academic theory and evidence on implementation and policy issues in child and family social policy.

3.0 Performance Implications

- 3.1 We are not anticipating any negative performance issues, this area of work is light on established research. The budget included funding to increase capacity in the data team to assist with the development of the data work.
- 3.2 If the work is successful, which we anticipate it will be, we expect that we will see an increase in performance and outcomes for children and families and care leavers.
- 3.3 To be successful this work will require input from Children and Young People's service, Technology and Change, Data and Intelligence, Data Governance and Finance who have all been part of preparing this bid and understand the scope for the research.

4.0 Options

- 4.1 We could accept the grant and contribute to this national research, access learning for our staff and build the case for change/develop practice.
- 4.2 We could reject the grant with no impact except the loss of this opportunity for our care leavers to contribute to this national research and share their views, and influence changes.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The funding available for this bid is £135k. This funding has been confirmed, subject to the authority accepting it.
- 5.2 There are no matching requirements to the funding so there will be no financial risk to the council. The grant will fund a part time data person from existing resource.
- 5.3 We will be responsible for meeting the agreed outcomes from the grant which are achievable.
- 5.4 If we were to fail to meet the requirements of the research bid the Nuffield foundation would have the right to withhold the grant payments.

6.0 Impact on Other Services/Organisations

- 6.1 This project will require cross departmental support to deliver. The bid was put together with the support of members from Children and Young People's Service, Data governance, technology and change and Strategic Services.
- 6.2 The bid contains remuneration for the supply of a part time data person.
- 6.3 There is an equality impact assessment screening form attached as an appendix to this report.
- 6.4 There is a Climate Change impact assessment attached as an appendix to this report.

7.0 Risk Management Implications

- 7.1 There are no anticipated risk management issues with the project. No data will be leaving our secure network and all existing security protocols will continue to apply. There is also the reassurance of ethical approval processes.

8.0 Human Resources Implications

- 8.1 There will be no new posts created as a result of this project but we expect that these will be internal posts which the funding will recredit for.

9.0 Reasons For Recommendations

- 9.1 Accepting this grant will provide us with an opportunity to contribute to the development and improvement of national data sets in respect of care leavers.
- 9.2 By doing this we can position ourselves as sector lead improvements leaders in the area of care leavers and children in care voice and data.
- 9.3 By accepting this grant we will be able to develop all of this at no cost to the authority and be involved in a developing research area, nationally.

10.0 Recommendation(s)

- 10.1 It is my recommendation that the Executive Member for Children and Young People's Service in consultation with the Corporate Director for Children and Young People's Service, Corporate Director, Strategic Resources and the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) authorises the Corporate Director Strategic Resources to accept the £135,00 grant funding from the Department for Education for delivery of this digital and data grant programme.

Stuart Carlton
Corporate Director – *Children and Young People's Service*

County Hall
Northallerton
31st January 2023

Author of report – Sam Clayton
Presenter of report – Stuart Carlton

Appendix 1 - 2.0 Phase One Plan
Appendix 2 Climate Impact
Appendix 3 – EIA Screening

Appendix 1

2.0 Phase One Plan

2.1 Overview

Phase One, from October 2022 until September 2023, will be broken down into two sub-parts, detailed below.

The first part, from October 2022 to March 2023, will be an extension of the mapping undertaken in the initial Discovery Phase. It will focus on understanding more information collection/collation in order to design revisions to the information system. This includes:

Maximising the role of youth voice in the IUP

- Explore in more depth how young people's (and staff's) voices are integrated into case notes and other information mechanisms within the LC team.
- Facilitate sharing of practices across NYCC teams to enhance youth voice in information systems.
- Identify ways to integrate young people's voices into the analysis, use and review of information.

Bringing together meaningful information from different sources

- Examine existing information items and measures used by different teams to see what can be integrated into the LC Team and avoid duplication.
- Identify gaps in existing measures.

Capturing meaningful aggregate outcomes for care leavers

- Where gaps exist, find appropriate new measures and decide the mechanisms to integrate these.
- Identify means to aggregate individual level data.

The second stage, from April to September 2023, will implement the new design to the information system and explore voice in the latter stages of the pathway (analysis/use/review):

Maximising the role of youth voice in the IUP

- Support the inclusion of young people and staff voices in the analysis, use and review of information.

Bringing together meaningful information from different sources & Capturing meaningful aggregate outcomes for care leavers

- Support the collection, analysis, use and review of meaningful information.

During this time, a recording mechanism will also be agreed and introduced to keep track of potential suggestions and areas of focus for the subsequent iterations of the IUP.

2.2 Research methods

The following outline plan will be finalised in discussion with the NYCC team, in line with the researcher resource allocated to NY.

2.2.1 'Day in the life' shadowing of PAs

The plan is to shadow two PAs from different teams, for one day each, from the time they arrive at work until the end of their working day. The researcher will shadow PAs as they interact with young people – whether in person, by phone or online – and

document their work in case notes or other information systems. The focus will be on understanding what information is recorded and how this incorporates young people's voices, as well as staff voices and those of other stakeholders (e.g. wider professionals, family, friends, etc.). This will involve informal conversational interviews with the PAs, as well as the young people that they work with, plus team colleagues (other PAs, administrative staff, etc.) who might support the PA in the recording of information.

This supports the following IUP activities:

- *Capturing meaningful outcomes for care leavers;*
- *Maximising voice in information use.*

2.2.2 PA focus group

Focus groups with PAs from two teams, to discuss:

- The relationship between the guidance and practice of recording case notes;
- How PAs record information, including interactions with young people, and what they hope to achieve in their writing;
- How PAs record information on the LCS system;
- How PAs receive information from other teams (e.g. NWD and Housing) and how well this works.

This supports the following IUP activities:

- *Bringing together information from different sources;*
- *Maximising voice in information use.*

2.2.3 Case notes analysis

In-depth analysis of the case notes young people in two teams, selected randomly.

This will be to identify:

- The range of information collected from young people.
- Range of information shared by other teams.
- Relationship between the guidance and practice of recording case notes.
- Styles of writing 'to' the young person.
- Possibilities for follow-up 'scraping' by data analyst.¹

This supports the following IUP activities:

- *Capturing meaningful outcomes for care leavers;*
- *Bringing together information from different sources;*
- *Maximising voice in information use.*

2.2.4 Multi-agency focus groups

A focus group including members from teams across NYCC (e.g. LC team, housing, data teams, NWD, virtual school) will be invited to examine the range of information topics/items/measures used for care leavers across NYCC. This will be to identify priority meaningful measures and to explore the possibility of avoiding duplication across different teams. They will be asked to:

- Share guidance and practices on writing case notes and documenting young people's voices;
- Share experiences of different information mechanisms/measures;
- Prioritise 'meaningful' outcomes items and measures;
- Identify possible gaps in existing items/measures;

¹ – NB. see paper by Kratky.

- Explore possibilities to share/merge data from different sources to avoid replication;
- Explore ethical considerations of sharing data.

This supports the following IUP activities:

- *Capturing meaningful outcomes for care leavers;*
- *Bringing together information from different sources;*

2.2.5 Young people's focus groups (October conference)

- Process of voicing and recording their ideas/thoughts/concerns/experiences to LC and other teams.
- Meaningfulness of existing and possible new measures.
- Views on sharing of information across teams.
- Views on young people's input on analysis, use and review of information

This supports the following IUP activities:

- *Capturing meaningful outcomes for care leavers;*
- *Bringing together information from different sources;*
- *Maximising voice in information use.*

2.2.6 Focus group with data teams

This focus group would include members of the Strategy and Performance Team and Data Intelligence Team, and possibly the No Wrong Door (NWD) data team. It would focus on discussing:

- Interactions between the teams, including the steps involved in accessing and analysing data;
- Where there are good data flows and limitations;
- Possibilities to do further analysis with existing data within LC and across different teams.

This supports the following IUP activities:

- *Capturing meaningful outcomes for care leavers;*
- *Bringing together information from different sources;*

2.2.7 Exploratory aggregate data analysis

A new four-year part-time data analyst will be in post in the autumn 2022. Their role requires further internal discussion and will span different teams within NYCC.

Possible areas for their focus include:

- Exploratory analysis of available data;
- Identify how to code free text in LCS to create a regular aggregate analysis;
- Link the IUP with NYCC's proposed algorithmic semantic searches of the LCS.

The research team will support this work by integrating it into the focus on ensuring information analysis, use and review includes different voices.

In the last two years, the analyst will focus on translating the work from NYCC to the wider Learning Network.

2.3 Evaluation

The focus on the IUP evaluation will begin in Phase One, with a focus on establishing a baseline of meaningful measures. As these measures will not have been identified at the start of Phase One, it is suggested that there is an initial proxy baseline in the

autumn 2022, and a subsequent enhanced baseline using the newly identified measures in the spring 2023.

Autumn 2022

- Identify existing evaluation measures and collect baseline data.

Spring 2023

- Use finalised measures for enhanced second baseline.

3.0 NYCC Relational-based practice

NYCC emphasises relational-based practice, underpinned by their 'Strength in relationship' Practice Model (see Figure 4 below) that defines its core purpose for those in care and leaving care as 'To support positive change that continues after we no longer need to be involved. We will create conditions that allow relationships to flourish'. Those who were interviewed in the Discovery Phase identified good relationships between leaving care staff and young people. There is reportedly a low staff turnover of frontline workers, which helps to ensure that the staff and young people know each other well over many years: 'it's all about relationships' (staff member).

Appendix 2



Climate change impact assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to help us understand the likely impacts of our decisions on the environment of North Yorkshire and on our aspiration to achieve net carbon neutrality by 2030, or as close to that date as possible. The intention is to mitigate negative effects and identify projects which will have positive effects.

This document should be completed in consultation with the supporting guidance. The final document will be published as part of the decision making process and should be written in Plain English.

If you have any additional queries which are not covered by the guidance please email climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk

Version 2: amended 11 August 2021

Please note: You may not need to undertake this assessment if your proposal will be subject to any of the following:

Planning Permission
Environmental Impact Assessment
Strategic Environmental Assessment

However, you will still need to summarise your findings in the summary section of the form below.

Please contact climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk for advice.

Title of proposal	Information use project, care leavers: Nuffield research Project
Brief description of proposal	Research to review what data we collect currently about care leavers, how this can be enhanced and use to space the future of the system to improve care leaver outcomes
Directorate	CYPS

Service area	Children and Families
Lead officer	Sam Clayton
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the impact assessment	Sam Clayton
Date impact assessment started	31/1/2023

Options appraisal

Were any other options considered in trying to achieve the aim of this project? If so, please give brief details and explain why alternative options were not progressed.

This project will be undertaken alongside our existing teams. It is anticipated that it will offer research to guide future practice improvement and improve outcomes for future care leavers.

What impact will this proposal have on council budgets? Will it be cost neutral, have increased cost or reduce costs?

Please explain briefly why this will be the result, detailing estimated savings or costs where this is possible.

The project will be fully funded by a grant from the Nuffield Foundation and managed via Oxford University and a consortium of academic institutions involved in the research.

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<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	<p>Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>No impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over and above business as usual • Evidence or measurement of effect • Figures for CO₂e • Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>
<p>Minimise greenhouse gas emissions e.g. reducing emissions from travel, increasing energy efficiencies etc.</p>	<p>Emissions from travel</p>	<p>x</p>		<p>All meetings are held virtually so travel is minimal</p>		
	<p>Emissions from construction</p>	<p>X</p>				

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where	No impact (Place a X in the box below where	Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over and above business as usual • Evidence or measurement of effect • Figures for CO₂e • Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>	
	Emissions from running of buildings		X		This project won't involve additional time working from buildings.		
	Emissions from data storage		X		The data from this project will be stored in the azure cloud based system which is an existing part of our network and all DIPA completed with the research partner and ethical approval.		
	Other						
<p>Minimise waste: Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost e.g. reducing use of single use plastic</p>		X					
<p>Reduce water consumption</p>		X					

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	<p>Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>No impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over and above business as usual • Evidence or measurement of effect • Figures for CO₂e • Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>
<p>Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise)</p>	X			<p>This may improve outcomes for care leavers in the future and therefore mean they require less interventions in their lives across a range of activities</p>		
<p>Ensure resilience to the effects of climate change e.g. reducing flood risk, mitigating effects of drier, hotter summers</p>		X				
<p>Enhance conservation and wildlife</p>		X				

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	<p>Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>No impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over and above business as usual • Evidence or measurement of effect • Figures for CO₂e • Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>
<p>Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of North Yorkshire's landscape</p>		<p>X</p>				
<p>Other (please state below)</p>						


<p>Are there any recognised good practice environmental standards in relation to this proposal? If so, please detail how this proposal meets those standards.</p>
<p>This project will work alongside our existing Children and Young People's environmental standards.</p>

Summary Summarise the findings of your impact assessment, including impacts, the recommendation in relation to addressing impacts, including any legal advice, and next steps. This summary should be used as part of the report to the decision maker.

This project will work to enhance our existing services ability to improve practice to support care leavers lead productive and positive lifes

Sign off section

This climate change impact assessment was completed by:


Name	Sam Clayton
Job title	Strategic Lead: Research
Service area	CYPS
Directorate	Children and families
Signature	
Completion date	21/1/2023

Authorised by relevant Assistant Director (signature):

Date: 31/01/2023

Appendix 3

Initial equality impact assessment screening form			
This form records an equality screening process to determine the relevance of equality to a proposal, and a decision whether or not a full EIA would be appropriate or proportionate.			
Directorate	CYPS		
Service area	CSC		
Proposal being screened	Information use project: Nuffield Foundation research		
Officer(s) carrying out screening	Sam Clayton		
What are you proposing to do?	Working with care leavers to understand what information would be useful to them in their adult lives and also develop a better data set for earlier in their care experience		
Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?	To improve outcomes for care leavers now and in the future.		
Does the proposal involve a significant commitment or removal of resources? Please give details.	The data person will be expected to supply the data for the project and work with Dr Lisa Holmes our research lead. There will be a small project group to facilitate the research and enable the learning to come back into the development of the service.		
Impact on people with any of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or NYCC's additional agreed characteristics As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is this service used by particular groups of people with protected characteristics? Does the proposal relate to functions that previous consultation has identified as important? Do different groups have different needs or experiences in the area the proposal relates to? <p>If for any characteristic it is considered that there is likely to be an adverse impact or you have ticked 'Don't know/no info available', then a full EIA should be carried out where this is proportionate. You are advised to speak to your Equality rep for advice if you are in any doubt.</p>			
Protected characteristic	Potential for adverse impact		Don't know/No info available
	Yes	No	
Age		X	
Disability		X	
Sex		X	
Race		X	
Sexual orientation		X	
Gender reassignment		X	
Religion or belief		X	
Pregnancy or maternity		X	
Marriage or civil partnership		X	
People in rural areas		X	
People on a low income		X	
Carer (unpaid family or friend)		X	
Does the proposal relate to an area where there are known inequalities/probable impacts (e.g. disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details.	This project won't involve new work with any groups of people. Instead, it will enhance the work we are already undertaking with our care leavers to improve future service delivery.		

<p>Will the proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate? (e.g. partners, funding criteria, etc.). Do any of these organisations support people with protected characteristics? Please explain why you have reached this conclusion.</p>	<p>This project is to improve the outcomes for care leavers, this is considered a protected characteristic and there have been some representation about this to government.</p>			
<p>Decision (Please tick one option)</p>	<p>EIA not relevant or proportionate:</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Continue to full EIA:</p>	
<p>Reason for decision</p>	<p>This project will not have additional impacts upon care leavers it should in the future help us to provide a more enhanced service that meets their needs, based on their feedback and the date collected.</p>			
<p>Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)</p>				
<p>Date</p>	<p>31st January 2023</p>			