

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

17 MAY 2023

STATEMENT OF EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Children and Families Service

Children and Families Service North Yorkshire continue to see a rise in the number of referrals across the service. Quarter 4 has seen an increase of 32% in contacts to MAST and an increase of 26% in Referrals to Social Care. Nearly 28,000 contacts were received in 2022/23, (up by 32% on 2021/22) and 4,990 referrals were made to Social Care (13% higher than 2021/22). Comparing the current position with the year immediately prior to the pandemic, we are now seeing 31% more children referred to Social Care. The service is well sighted to the pressures caused by this and our teams are working hard to maintain a high standard of service delivery.

Early Help Service

The number of households receiving support from the Early Help Service increased to 1,475 at the end of Quarter 4. This is the first time that the number of ongoing households has exceeded that recorded at the time of the initial lockdown in March 2020 (n=1,402). Homes for Ukraine continued to be supported by Early Help. As of 29th March 2023, we have 477 identified sponsors offering accommodation to families.

Fostering

Fostering North Yorkshire held their 2023 Conference at the Lakeside Conference Centre, the theme focusing on the wellbeing of our North Yorkshire foster carers. More than 50 foster carers were in attendance with 18 of them receiving long service awards. As part of our council plan commitment, we have approved some new measures to help foster carers navigate the financial pressures on them and increase the number of carers coming forward. The raft of measures included - more mileage paid, improved retainer payments, a bridging payment, access to the council's employee benefits and a recommend friend payment. Foster Carers together with their foster children have been instrumental in producing a refreshed foster logo for the service which was revealed at the conference.

Youth Justice

Over the past twelve months ending in September 2022, we have seen significant decrease in First Time Entrants into the criminal justice system (r=120) in North Yorkshire compared with the rate 12 months previously (r=191) The rate of 120 relates to 66 young people and places North Yorkshire towards the top of the 2nd Quartile nationally. Reoffending rate, at 28.8%, remained below 30% for the second consecutive cohort which is significant progress that has been seen in the last 3 years.

Creative Engagement Youth Voice Team

In Q4 we welcomed the first of our 2 new international social workers arriving from Zimbabwe and South Africa to join our teams in Scarborough. A further 8 new international social workers will join our team during April and May. Over 100 enquiries were generated from a live advert for 5 new social work apprentices in the East of the county. A number of applicants transferred their applications and have been successful in securing other roles in our teams.

NY voice and creative engagement completed the Amplify creative writing programme this quarter and a group of young people attended the Play in a day project during February half term. Celebrating International Woman's day, a group of girls and young women in care

gathered to hear inspirational female speakers and talk about what being a girl is like for them, at Coventry University in Scarborough.

Virtual School

The team has supported the newly arrived UASC young people with English tutoring. We have commenced a new project with 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 with us throughout the design process. Initial responses are very positive and comments received that it provides guidance and a holistic view of the needs of the child.

Care Planning and Support

An exciting opportunity arose for one of our children in foster care who met with William and Kate at St Augustine's School. They were successful in being awarded a mental health grant for £5,000. We will be putting this young person forward for a Virtual School Achievement Award for this work.

Performance of Statutory Assessment and Education, Health and Care Plans

The Inclusion service continues to receive high numbers of requests for assessment for an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. The rise in new EHC plans being issued results from an increasing demand for assessments seen during the year. The total received this year will be much higher than seen in previous years. The number of EHC plans being issued within a 20-week period has improved on previous years and is showing a steady improvement over this year despite the increase in volume of requests.

In the calendar year 2022 the rate of completion in 20 weeks was just over 50%, we anticipate a further slight improvement in the first quarter of 2023. There has been a continuation of the increasing trend in new EHC plans, which has risen consistently each year since 2018, up by 64% to 815 in 2022. In January 2022 N Yorkshire had over 4,400 EHCPs, equivalent to 2.8% of the 0-25 population.

Development of SEND Strategy

As we have seen today, the new partnership SEND Strategy is with us for the completion of the democratic process through the council.

Social Care support for Disabled children and their families

A working group is currently reviewing the Short Breaks offer for Disabled Children with a focus on developing a broader range of provision for the children young people and families of North Yorkshire. Feedback will be sought from young people and their families to help shape the offer moving forward.

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:

Preparation for this continues with partners which includes children, young people and their families as well as 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.

Medium Term Financial Strategy – May 2023

Demand increases in the number of children and young people assessed as requiring an Education, Health and Care Plan has resulted in additional pressure on a range of budgets in children and young people's services including SEN casework and education psychology teams as well as high needs commissioning and SEND transport budgets. A capital programme of £20.5m has been agreed to establish over 300 new places within specialist provision across the county over the next three to five years, including places within targeted mainstream provision and special schools to ensure that children and young people can find the right provision locally.

Directorate 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.

Corporate Parenting Members' Group

I am pleased to report that the 2022/23 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.

COUNCILLOR JANET SANDERSON