

## **NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL**

**19 JULY 2023**

### **STATEMENT OF COUNCILLOR JANET SANDERSON**

#### **Children and Families performance**

Children & Families performance continues to deliver good performance despite continued high demand for services. During 2022/23 we received over 27,500 contacts, an increase of over 5,000 (22%) compared to the previous year. This continues to feed through and place demand on Children's Social Care (CSC). The number of referrals increasing in Q4 to 1,400. This is the highest number of referrals in a single quarter in seven years. Despite the sustained pressure on the service, we continue to see good performance. 97% of Children and Families assessments were completed on time which is significantly better than the national rate (84.5%).

The number of households receiving support from the Early Help Service has increased by 82 in May 2023 to 1,536 at the month end. This is the first time that that the number of ongoing households has exceeded 1,500.

Homes for Ukraine continued to be supported by Early Help, completing welfare, welcome and '5 month' visits to the sponsors and guests. As of 25th May, we now have 501 identified sponsors offering accommodation to families.

#### **Children in our care**

The overall number of looked after children rose by 3 this quarter to 454, of which 42 were UASC. Short term stability decreased slightly but performance remains good at 8.9%. Long term placement stability remained stable at 67% at the end of the quarter.

Both our No Wrong Door hubs have had significant refurbishment in the last few months and the homes have a brighter and more homely feel to them. Despite issues around capacity, staff continue to respond well to the increased pressures for children's placements.

At the beginning of May, NY voice and creative engagement team restructured the Care Champions youth group and there are now separate Junior and Senior groups. An exciting programme of activities for is planned for the summer holidays.

Fostering North Yorkshire held their 2023 Conference at the Lakeside Conference Centre. The theme was foster carer wellbeing. The conference provided a welcomed opportunity to talk to foster carers about the recent enhanced offer and to interact directly with those who look after the children in our care. We recognise the importance of this event and now plan to hold this conference annually.

#### **Youth Justice**

The 12 months ending December 2022 saw a decrease in the rate of First Time Entrant's in North Yorkshire compared with the same period 12 months earlier, to 131 (relates to 72 young people). The rate of custodial sentences in North Yorkshire remained very low at 0.04 during the 12 months ending March 2023. The latest 12-month cohort (Jul 20 – Jun 21) showed a decrease in the binary re-offending rate in North Yorkshire to 33.5% compared with the same period 12 months previously.

#### **Inclusion**

### **Performance of Statutory Assessment and Education, Health 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 trends observed in North Yorkshire are similar to those reported nationally. The number of EHC plans being issued within a 20-week period has improved on previous years and is continuing to improve over the year despite the increase in volume of requests.

The percentage of children and young people with an Education Health and Care plan (EHCP) in North Yorkshire is 2.8%, compared with 2.9% nationally. Recent data shows that the percentage of children with EHCPs who are educated in Special Schools (both Local Authority and Maintained Special schools) in North Yorkshire is 28%, compared with 27.7% nationally.

### **Suspensions and Exclusions.**

This year has seen an increase in suspensions and exclusions in both primary and secondary schools, exceeding the figure seen in previous years to date. This reflects the national picture. The LA continues to work with schools to offer both support and challenge and this will continue into the new academic year. The work undertaken is aligned to the direction of travel outlined in the Department for Education SEND and Alternative Provision Action Plan (March 23), as well as North Yorkshire Area SEND Strategy.

### **“This is Me” festival**

The disabled children’s social work team supports children and young people and their families to thrive and be fully included in their communities. A highlight this month has been the ‘This is Me’ festival in Ripon organised by North Yorkshire’s Nidderdale and Morton Children’s Resource Centre. The festival has run since 2018 and has grown in size year on year. This year it was attended by hundreds of children, young people and their families. The music festival offers a fun, family-friendly environment for children and young people with disabilities. Display stands offered information about local and national groups and support networks were shared. Feedback from young people and their families has been very positive.

### **Locality Boards**

In North Yorkshire the LA supports Local Partnerships of schools (Locality Boards) to develop early intervention and preventative work at earlier levels of SEND need. They use data for their area to develop an action plan which is reviewed annually. In September each of the Boards will be contributing to an event for all schools and education settings to participate in. This event includes keynote speakers and opportunities to share good practice, and celebrate the impact their interventions have had to support Inclusion

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

Demand increases in the number of children and young people assessed as requiring an Education, Health and Care Plan have been well documented in the council’s finance and performance reporting. The financial pressure in North Yorkshire reflects a national funding issue and the Directorate are engaging with the Department for Education in Tranche 3 of the ‘Developing Better Value in SEND’ programme. The aim of the programme is, through diagnostic and case review work, to identify and implement sustainable changes that improve support and outcomes for children and young people with SEND, as well as to improve the financial stability of High Needs Block budgets.

Work is also progressing to mitigate demand pressures in high-cost external residential placements.

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.

COUNCILLOR JANET SANDERSON