

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

13 NOVEMBER 2024

STATEMENT OF CHAIR

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Since the last Full Council, there has been 1 committee meeting, held on 4 October.

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 21 June 2024

<https://edemocracy.northyorks.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1241&MIId=7818&Ver=4>

Public Statements

There were no public questions or statements.

Feedback from Scrutiny Board on 16 August 2024

I informed Committee Members of the matters that I had raised at the Scrutiny Board meeting and the responses to these from the Executive Members.

Child Death Overview Panel Annual Report 2023/2024

We considered the CDOP Annual Report, which was presented by Anita Dobson, Chair of the Panel. Anita explained that North Yorkshire and City of York have fewer child deaths compared to other parts of the country, although just one death is one too many.

The key points are summarised below:

- Members were pleased to hear that although national information only covers young people up to 18 years of age, the Council will provide data on care leavers up to 25 years in the next annual report.
- Although Covid has affected the mental health of many young people, there is nothing to specify that it has played a major part in child deaths by suicide. However, the panel is very mindful to consider the mental health of young people when carrying out reviews.
- The Committee heard that the CDOP is focussing on 2 campaigns for 2024/25: "Who's Sober" and a Road Safety campaign.

Children Accessing Alternative Provision

We received a presentation from Cerys Townend, Head of Alternative Provision. She explained that the local authority has a duty to assess the suitability of Elected Home Education (EHE) and do this annually. The Council can only intervene if there is a safeguarding issue. Councillor Wilkinson informed the Committee that home education is a national issue and is being addressed by the Local Government Association (LGA).

The Committee heard that Alternative Provision (AP) is provided by commercial businesses, selected by schools. Guidance and training is provided to schools so that they can meet the child's requirements. The Council commission the providers and carry out quality assurance and reviews.

Members also heard about how families are supported when a school closes, and how provision is arranged for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Designated SEND officers carry out review meetings with parents to place students in a setting suitable to their needs.

Cerys also explained that the Council monitors data and practically engage with schools when a child has had 3 suspensions to prevent it escalating further.

Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic – Consultation with Care Leavers

The Committee received a summary from Jonny Hoyle, Development Lead for Child Permanence of the key findings of the consultation with care leavers. We then had a very detailed conversation about how we would like to progress with the Motion of North Yorkshire Council recognising Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic. The consultation paper recommended for a task and finish group to be set up. The Committee welcomed this, and we all agreed that we wouldn't be able to make a recommendation to Full Council on the Motion until the task and finish group has engaged with all the directorates to consider the implications of considering Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic.

The Committee agreed to include the Chair, Vice-Chair, Young People's Champion, and the proposer of the motion in the task and finish group.

We aim to bring make a recommendation on the Motion at the Full Council Meeting on 21 February 2025.

COUNCILLOR BARBARA BRODIGAN

31 October 2024