

## NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

19 JULY 2017

## STATEMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER

**Visit by new Minister of State for Children and Families**

On 22 June 2017 we welcomed the new Minister for Children and Families Robert Goodwill MP to County Hall. The Minister has a new portfolio within DfE which encompasses children's safeguarding, special educational needs, early years and the national opportunity area programme. Supported by key civil servants, the Minister not only met the Leader and Executive Member with senior officers but also welcomed the opportunity to discuss practice with front line staff of the LA and partners. During the visit he also spent time with young people who had experienced the care system in North Yorkshire. Further visits to local services are already planned. We anticipate that the appointment of a local MP into such a key role will see further opportunities to enhance the high national profile of our local practice.

**Personalised Learning Pathways**

At the celebration event on 29 June, Pete Dwyer, Corporate Director, presented certificates to 43 young people with additional needs who have completed their learning course over the last year. At the event, attended by members of the NYCC Adult Learning & Skills Service and other partners, the young people told us their successes and achievements. The program supports each young person in their development, based on their individual needs and how they learn best. It focuses on strategies to help young adults achieve their goals concerning work, skill development and independence and is delivered locally in partnership with providers to ensure young people remain within their community with their families and friends. Over the past six years there has been considerable growth and development of the Personalised Learning Pathway model. This success can be put down to the excellent work that has been achieved by staff from special schools, the Inclusion Service, Adult Learning and Skills Service (ALSS) and local arrangements developed with families and small local organisations that work with our young people. We have seen an increasing number of people prospering in their communities from the first four students in 2011 we expect to see over 50 students on the programme in 2017/18.

**Regionalisation of adoption**

In line with the government's ambitions to create regional adoption services, three Regional Adoption Agencies (RAAs) have been developed within the Yorkshire and Humber region. One, Adoption North and Humber went live in April 2017, joining North Yorkshire, York, East Riding, Hull, North Lincs, and North East Lincs. in the delivery of adoption services. York City Council is the lead of this RAA. Work is currently ongoing to develop the RAA further. North Yorkshire adoption workers will remain employees of North Yorkshire and will not be TUPE'd across to the lead agency of York. We anticipate the new approach will increase the likelihood of early access to adoptive placements particularly for family groups and children who have been harder to place.

**Fostering**

North Yorkshire continues to run an excellent fostering service that enables the county to look after a very high proportion of our looked after children in our own foster placements. It is ranked first for value for money, having the lowest spend on placements. When looking at the total looked after population, North Yorkshire continues to perform well above the CIPFA benchmarking group where the national average is 55%, with 85% in North Yorkshire LA foster placements. Only 11 children (3.5%) are placed in independent fostering

agencies (IFA placements). The situation nationally is very different with authorities having to place significant numbers of looked after children in external placements.

### **Children and Families Performance**

The Prevention Service continues to make head way providing targeted early help, reducing the demand on more specialist or reactive services. The Prevention Service continues to help more families with a wider range of provision and has doubled the number of cases that are open to it, whilst saving £3 million from the budget, when compared to the previous models. The Multi-Agency Assessment and Screening Team (MAST) is continuing to ensure that contacts are referred to the most appropriate service. As a result of referrals being forwarded to the correct service, no referrals to Children's Social Care have resulted in "no further action" since January 2016, allowing the service to be confident that they are best suited to help the children the support. The increase in referrals to prevention has led to a further reduction in referrals to social care. This means that we know families are receiving services much earlier and preventing the need for unnecessary escalation to social care.

### **Children in Care**

Performance for children in care remains very strong. The overall number of Looked After Children has remained steady at 415 (which includes unaccompanied asylum seekers) and is bucking the national trend that is seeing a significant increase in looked after children. The rate of Looked After Children per 10,000 remains significantly lower and is almost half of the national benchmark.

Based on the decrease in the number of North Yorkshire children in care, the Council continues to be in a strong position to at least maintain the 20% reduction in looked after children numbers set as part of the 2020 programme. As the service continues to work on reducing the number of children in care, it is reassuring to know that the service continues to place the safety of the child at the heart of everything they do. This includes ensuring that children are not discharged prematurely from care and that children are still placed in care if a period of care is the most suitable way of protecting the child.

### **National Strategic Review of Special Educational Needs provision**

Local Authorities have been allocated funding by the DfE to review their provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and to develop and publish strategic plans for this provision. In North Yorkshire a significant amount of engagement and analysis of provision had already undertaken and work is ongoing to develop and consult on local models of educational provision in the areas of social emotional and mental health; communication and interaction, cognition and learning and sensory, physical and medical. This work will feed into the overarching strategic plan for SEND which will cover the age range 0-25 and the continuum of provision for SEND. The local authority will develop and consult on the overarching strategic plan and is aiming to publish it by 31st March 2018.

The DfE has also committed capital funding to help local authorities create new school places and improve facilities for children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). North Yorkshire is required to publish a capital plan to show this capital funding will be invested and will receive a total of £500 000 from 2018/19 to 2020/21. The priority for the use of this funding is to invest in sufficient specialist places in the county to enable children and young people to be educated locally and to reduce the need for high cost out of area placements.

## **Special school performance**

Ninety percent of the LA's 10 special schools are good or outstanding according to Ofsted. The recent inspection of Forest Moor School, whilst judging that the school still requires improvement, recognised the rapid improvement brought about through the new leadership team. In fact 'leadership and management', and 'personal development, behaviour and welfare' are now judged to be good at the school, a positive indicator of its capacity to go from strength to strength.

The work of the Special School Improvement Partnership is encouraging collaborative approaches across the ten special schools. This year the vast majority of schools have engaged in review visits involving a peer headteacher, an external SEND consultant and the LA Lead Adviser SEND. This methodology has enabled in depth reviews of key aspects of provision within the schools, with recommendations for further development.

## **Partners in Practice**

DfE is working with seven of the best local authorities as Partners in Practice to understand how local authorities get to good and what it takes to move from good to excellent; to interrogate the most important practice questions facing children's social care; and to drive sector-led peer-to-peer improvement. We are delighted to be part of this cohort of LAs. Following the sharing of our offer of support, requests from other local authorities have been high and work now moves forward at great pace. We are now working with Bradford, Middlesbrough, Durham, Hull, Redcar and Cleveland, and Wakefield. Feedback has been very positive both from DfE and the authorities who we are assisting.

As part of the Programme the nationally recognised No Wrong Door methodology will be extended to those vulnerable young people with social, emotional and mental health issues (SEMH) and to care leavers. The SEMH element focuses on vulnerable children and young people known or at risk of being known to social care, with SEMH needs. The project in the first year will focus on approximately 50 young people who are transitioning to secondary school with a pattern of exclusions or identified SEMH. It will also support a small number of pupils where educational provision has broken down with a view to ensuring relevant and appropriate support locally. The 'No Wrong Door' innovative and enhanced approach aims to prevent CYP from being placed in out of authority placements thereby enhancing their local education and care offer and reducing both budgets. It will also reduce the likelihood of this cohort becoming NEET or known to the youth offending population and better equip them more holistically for adult/parenthood.

There will be a multi-disciplinary team based within and around the Pupil Referral Service hubs in the East and West of the county including a Hub Coordinator. Each area will also have access to key colleagues working within the school environment. The dedicated support will include Family Liaison Workers, Family Therapists, an Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapists and Clinical and Educational psychologists all working towards specific outcomes identified for the young people.

**Cllr Janet Sanderson**  
**Executive Member for Children's Services and Special Educational Needs**