

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**14 NOVEMBER 2018****STATEMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER****Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services**

In my last statement I reported that we had received a two week inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children in care and care leavers. I am sure you will, by now, be aware that North Yorkshire Children's Services were judged to be the first local authority in the country to receive an outstanding grade in every category in what is a new and challenging social care inspection framework which focuses on the effectiveness of frontline practice. We extend our congratulations to everyone in the service on their fantastic achievement.

Social Worker of the Year Awards

I am also delighted to announce that our Leaving Care Team has been shortlisted as finalists in the nationally prestigious Social Worker of the Year Awards in the Creative & Innovative Social Work Practice category.

The Leaving Care Team has pioneered the extension of the No Wrong Door way of working to support young people leaving the care of the Authority. This has resulted in an increase in care leavers accessing employment, training or education, whilst we remain in close contact with almost every care leaver and able to provide support should they falter on their path to life as independent, active adults.

Care Leavers Conference

The 25th October saw the inaugural Care Leaver Conference, held at York University, attended by nearly 80 Care Leavers, along with staff, agencies and organisations who support them. The event recognised the achievements of Care Leavers over the past year, shared experiences and thanked staff, volunteers and partners for their ongoing commitment and support.

The event included the launch of North Yorkshire's Core Offer to Care Leavers and a screening of the inspiring film 'the one percent' (co-produced with Care Leavers to share their challenges, achievements and experiences). Presentations were given by Coram Voice about their national Care Leaver voice group and by University of York about the support universities offer to Care Leavers. Young People were given the opportunity to take part in 'money management' and '5 minute mindfulness' sessions, as well as talking to representatives from a range of various organisations at 'market stalls'. The day culminated with an awards ceremony for Care Leavers, staff & agencies.

Medium Term Financial Strategy & 2020 North Yorkshire – Feb 2018

Given significant financial pressures in High Needs related budgets such as SEN Transport – stemming from the unfunded increase in the number of children assessed as requiring EHCPs following the implementation of SEND legislative reforms in 2014 - the Directorate has brought forward a number of key projects to address cost pressures in these areas. Proposals have been developed (which have been out to consultation until 11 November) including:

- to review and transform the Pupil Referral Service across the county and to deal with the impact of rising permanent and fixed-term exclusions

- to review the provision of guided-learning hours for post-16 education provision to bring it in line with statutory requirements

Further savings proposals will be developed in line with the Strategic Plan for SEN and review of the High Needs Block and consultation will be undertaken with pupils, schools and families as appropriate.

A number of DfE policies result in financial obligations sitting with the local authority. With DSG reserves fully exhausted, the cost of school redundancies, closing school deficits and sponsored academy deficits falls to the local authority to fund. The gross value of these obligations in 2018/19 is estimated at c£2m.

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.

Secure Home Bid

On the back of the very successful No Wrong Door programme, we were encouraged by the DfE to put forward a bid to fund a scoping exercise for developing and running a Secure Children's Home. The shortfall in placements nationally for this resource was highlighted in the National Residential Review conducted by Sir Martin Narey.

We were one of only three successful bids and have been awarded circa £100,000 to work up a detailed proposal to deliver an innovative solution to this complex issue. Our proposal will keep to the core principles of No Wrong Door and would seek to deliver a service which would combine the models of a secure children's home and a secure school, which is a separate initiative being led by the Ministry of Justice. This proposal is in its infancy but if successful could achieve significant departmental investment and ongoing revenue for North Yorkshire.

Children & Families Performance

Our Children and Families Service continues to deliver outstanding service to vulnerable children despite continuing pressures arising from high levels of demand.

The number of contacts and subsequent referrals for service fell in the second quarter as a result of the school summer break. However, the trend in contacts remains upward, and the number of contacts received in Q2 2018/19 was 3% higher than in the same period last year.

The Department for Education recently published results of the 2018 Children in Need Census. The census highlighted that 2017/18 saw almost 69,000 children placed on a child protection plan across England in 2017/18, an increase of almost 4%. This has been mirrored in North Yorkshire, where we have seen an increase of 3.4% in the number of new child protection plans in the same period. However, the service has taken positive steps to ensure we provide the right degree of intervention at the right time - this has reduced the number of children subject to an open child protection plan by 15% between May and September this year.

We continue to provide safe and caring homes for children in our care. We have seen an increase in the number of children at risk of serious harm which necessitates coming into our care increasing the number of looked after children by 3.1% to 447, of which 18 are unaccompanied asylum seeker children

Partners in Practice update

As a DfE Partner in Practice we continue work towards driving innovation and innovative practice. We have successfully completed our target days for year 2 to support more than 12

LAs and have received some very positive feedback from recent visits. We have experienced significant increase in demand following our Outstanding Ofsted outcome and to manage this we have provided workshops and events in three key areas of interest: Quality of Practice, Multi-Agency Screening Team (MAST), and No Wrong Door (NWD).

Our NWD extension projects continue to deliver valuable services to our children and young people: we have held our Care Leaver day and apprentice recruitment is underway, the new cohort for the Back on Track SEMH (children and young people with social, emotional and mental health needs) programme has been agreed and work has started. The Single View of a Child project invitation to tender period has now ended, with a good response from providers. Planning is also underway towards proposals for post 2020 when funding ends. We continue to engage with the DfE appointed evaluators (NatGen), having completed workshops and interviews across the programme.

Janet Sanderson

Executive Member for Children's Services and Special Educational Needs