

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

15 MAY 2019

STATEMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Strengthening Families, Protection Children (SFPC) Programme

The government announced a budget commitment in October 2018 of £84 million to a programme called Strengthening Families Protecting Children (SFPC). This programme will run over five years and support 20 Local Authorities who are inspected as Requiring Improvement and have increasing numbers of Looked After Children. This innovative programme will be delivered in partnership with the Department for Education and three Local Authority Innovation models; North Yorkshire (No Wrong Door), Leeds (Family Valued) and Hertfordshire (Family Safeguarding).

North Yorkshire are now working closely with the DFE to develop a suitable delivery model that supports innovation in other Local Authorities whilst increasing capacity in North Yorkshire. The programme will generate an appropriate income over the course of five years and will seek to develop a sustainable improvement model for other Local Authorities.

There are a considerable number of children placed in North Yorkshire from other Local authority areas, increasing demand on universal services such as schools and health. This programme will support an evolving commitment from other LAs to support their children locally, as has been achieved in North Yorkshire.

North Yorkshire Youth Voice Conference

This year's successful conference was aimed at all age groups with 150 children and young people from 15 secondary, 9 primary, 4 special and 1 pupil referral schools attending and taking part in a series of workshops and debates around improving mental health, refugee voices and understating how parliament works. Those attending also heard from North Yorkshire Police who spoke to them about Hate Crime, its effects and ways of dealing with and reporting it.

Students were also able to attend a Question and Answer session with senior leaders and managers from North Yorkshire including Richard Flinton, and Dr Maggie Atkinson (Independent Chair of the NYSCB).

Members of the Youth Voice Executive held a debate with the whole audience to discuss its campaign for the coming year, those attending were asked to choose between issues around bullying and stigma. Bullying was chosen as the priority for this year.

Medium Term Financial Strategy & 2020 North Yorkshire – May 2019

High Needs financial pressures have continued to present a financial challenge to the Directorate and the local authority has provided significant investment to top-up the shortfall in funding for SEN. There are a number of key projects planned to address cost pressures including the transformation of the PRS service and a review of home to school transport arrangements. Proposals will also be developed to review the way in which the local authority provides support to raising standards in schools.

These plans have been developed with a clear intention to ensure that cash savings are achieved over the period of the refreshed savings plan (2019-22).

The Local Authority is also at the forefront of innovation in Children's Social Care and is developing proposals, in conjunction with the DfE, to roll out the successful No Wrong Door model to other local authorities under the SFPC Programme.

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.

Children & Families Performance

North Yorkshire's Children & Families Service has seen a reduction in demand over the last Quarter, with the lowest quarterly number of referrals to Children's Social Care in more than two years. This reduction in the final Quarter of the year brings the overall total number of referrals for 2018/19 to 4,180. Whilst this is 6.9% (n=312) lower than in 2017/18, the total annual referrals for 2018/19 was 13% higher than in 2016/17.

In line with the changes we have seen in the number of referrals over the past Quarter, the number of children receiving statutory support through a Child Protection Plan has continued to reduce. We have now witnessed three successive Quarters in which the number Child Protection Plans have fallen. At the end of Quarter 4, 369 children were subject to a Child Protection Plan, a reduction of 12% on Quarter 3 2018/19 and a reduction of 32% compared to the peak of 539 at the end of Quarter 1 2018/19. This reduction follows work by the service to improve its response to families earlier and in doing so reduce manage and reduce risk.

Having seen increasing demand for Looked After Children's Services over the past two Quarters, Quarter 4 has seen a reduction in the number of children in our care. At the end of Quarter 3 there were 454 children in our care, including 24 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. By the end of Quarter 4, the number of children in our care had reduced to 435, including 22 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.

The number of First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice system in North Yorkshire continues to reduce. Between the last official figures prior to the introduction of the Youth Outcomes Panel (March 2017) and the most recent official figures (September 2018), we have seen a reduction of 57% in the number of First Time Entrants.

North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board Update

Following The Wood Review (2015) and the subsequent government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)' there is a requirement for all local areas to review their multi agency safeguarding arrangements (MASA) and publish their arrangements by June 2019 and implemented by September 2019.

Proposals to establish a new North Yorkshire Children's Safeguarding Partnership, which it is proposed will also incorporate the role of the Children's Trust, is currently the subject of consultation with partner agencies and the Health & Wellbeing Board. A report making final recommendations and seeking approval to establish the new proposed structures will be considered by The Executive in June.

Janet Sanderson

Executive Member for Children's Services and Special Educational Needs