

North Yorkshire County Council

Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 21 September 2018 at 10am at County Hall, Northallerton.

Present: County Councillor Janet Jefferson in the Chair.

County Councillors, Stephanie Duckett, Keane Duncan, Cliff Lunn, John Mann, Zoe Metcalfe, Gill Quinn and Annabel Wilkinson.

Co-opted Members: Paul Bircumshaw, Dr Tom Cavell-Taylor and David Sharp (North Yorkshire Youth)

In attendance. County Councillors Patrick Mulligan and Janet Sanderson (Executive Members)

Officers: Ray Busby (Scrutiny Officer (Central Services)), Stuart Carlton (Corporate Director Children and Young Peoples Services),

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillors Val Arnold, Lindsay Burr MBE, Joe Plant and Stuart Martin MBE;

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

149. Minutes

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2018 having been printed and circulated be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

150. Any Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to note.

151. Public Questions

Ms Kerry Fox attended the meeting to submit the following statement and question

“A Child in Need (CIN) is defined in Section 17, Children Act 1989 where: The child is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services by the Local Authority, or Their health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of such services, or They are disabled”

The Disability Law Service has written to North Yorkshire county council after they conducted research nationally identifying local authorities practice in relation to discriminatory policies

They state "The Disability Law Service is campaigning to bring about a change in the way Local Authorities assess and care manage the needs of autistic children so that they have the same opportunity to receive support on an equal basis to all other disabled young people. We believe that this must involve (among other things) that right to be assessed by social workers with Children with Disabilities' expertise"

Parent Carers in North Yorkshire are reporting

They are being referred into Safeguarding Social Care with their cases going before "Friends and Family Panel" there are no instances of these cases being under child protection.

The referrals to Safeguarding are putting families off following through with assessments for support as, rather than understandable and very commonplace needs being assessed, a judgement of their parenting capacity seems to be the first approach.

We are finding that families who are referred to safeguarding are being awarded much less help than the assessments note and believe this is due to financial constraints which does not allow for the needs of the child to be addressed

We would like to request that scrutiny look into how many families (in particular children and young people with Autism) have been denied access to DCS requests? How many referrals and enquiries on behalf of families via others in children's services were also declined. (including repeated requests)

We have instances and reports of young people with Autism and/or learning difficulties being refused help and support and as such the escalation has resulted in police being involved and deteriorating mental health.

Where overnight respite has been in place through disabled children social care once that young person has reached 18 this stops and there isn't a continuation within adult services or the transition service -this is resulting in some families becoming so isolated as they cannot venture out with their young person and as such the whole family becomes socially isolated in so far as the basic task of popping to the shop becomes an almighty barrier. This is despite the requirement in the Children and Families Act, and the Care Act for a clear transition, and for this to take priority in the ECHP from Age 14 with Preparation for Adulthood being the key theme.

Carers and Families

Carer Assessments appear to be equally problematic, with no or little signposting for carers of disabled children, including assessment of carers needs. Some localities award grants to carers of disabled children for their needs/respite and this would appear to be a postcode lottery with some localities offering nothing despite need. (Carers grants for those living in Craven through Carers Resource but not replicated in the other North Yorks localities)

We would ask that scrutiny consider the implications of the engaging of Safeguarding Social Workers in the needs of disabled children in need and their carers, given the need for these to be assessed by appropriate and proficient social workers working within the area of their expertise and to also look at postcode lotteries within county in relation to carers needs/support.

Those in receipt of services from disabled children's social care and direct payments report that there are significant difficulties in recruiting carers and that the amount allocated to pay carers by the hour is, in a lot of cases, not enough. Those requesting an enhanced rate are reporting delays in receiving notification from panel.

There is concern regarding no summer schemes or activities for children and young people to access with some schemes only been available to those in receipt of overnight resource centre respite.

The local offer in North Yorkshire is so poor that if any activities exist families have no way of knowing.

We would welcome scrutiny of the local offer in relation to out of school and holiday schemes that are accessible to children and young people with disabilities.

When activities are available many are postcode dependent with some being accessible if you live in a certain area these local offers are not countywide therefore many children and young people will not be able to access anything if they live outside these boundaries (yet within county)

Some schemes are so oversubscribed that waiting lists exist as the capacity to meet needs is so overstretched. We would welcome an audit on disabled children's childcare and holiday play schemes.

We would like to come before Scrutiny in December with a full report detailing the experiences of families trying to access social care and support (including those aged 18-25 under transitions/HAS if they are still in education and training)

We are currently conducting research into the scale of issues and concerns raised.

Kind Regards
Save SEND Services North Yorkshire"

Ray Busby advised he had received the following response from the Corporate Director for Childrens Services

"NY has received a letter from Disability law Service. Our legal team have written to DLS with our response and the full eligibility criteria along with our view that our eligibility criteria are compliant because Children and Families carry out assessments where the young person does not meet DCSEC. In complex cases DCS and C&F will work together to complete the assessment.

The Safeguarding teams are responsible for working with children specified within the Care Act and this includes children with disabilities. They are qualified social workers and are highly effective in carrying out assessments, working alongside DCS as required.

We are currently in discussion with DCS and C&F with regards to reviewing the continuum of support for families with disabled children. We intend to establish a working group and will invite NYPACT for representation to ensure that the offer of support is appropriate for families and that services across CYPS work collaboratively to support assessed needs.

It is difficult to comment on individual cases and would suggest that families who are in this position contact us directly rather than through Save SEND Services. We will then be able to discuss their individual circumstances and ensure they are receiving the support they require.

The transition arrangements between CYPS and HAS are currently under review. We have agreed a new model and work is currently being undertaken to finalise the pathway, protocols. It will involve HAS social workers co working a case from the age of 16 years to strengthen the arrangements at the point of transition from 18 years.

We will be engaging with families in the near future with the intention the new model commences in April 19.

The review of the continuum will encompass many of these areas although we dispute the comment regarding the proficiency of our workforce. We are in discussion with NYPACT to undertake an audit of provision across the LA and nearby LA's so that we can identify gaps and take steps to stimulate the market. This includes discussions with Stronger Communities.

Whether recruiting PAs through a DP, Resource Centre Workers or domiciliary care companies finding suitable carers is really hard. It is not well paid and is not a career people tend to stick with. DCS pay the approved DP rate for NYCC.

In summary

The LA is already undertaking a review of the continuum of support for families with disabled children across social care and we would be happy to present findings to O&S when the work is completed.

It would be helpful if the report from SEND Services was fed into this group to help shape actions. NYPACT will be the parent carer forum with whom the directorate will work.

NYPACT have agreed to undertake an audit of provision. This was agreed over the summer and we are in the process of finalising the commission.

It would be helpful if individual families mentioned above would contact the directorate directly so that we can review their current situation."

Members thanked Kerry Fox for attending to put the question. Members asked that the findings and conclusions of the review of the continuum of support for families with disabled children come to committee. It was recognised that this might entail some re-jigging of both the work programme and scheduled meeting dates. An undertaking was given to inform Ms Fox of these arrangements once known.

152. Looked After Children Strategy 2018-2021: Core Offer to Care Leavers

Considered –

Report and presentation by Vicky Metherringham, Head Looked After Children, permanence and leaving care (CYPS) and Maggie Allen, Team Manager - Leaving Care, Children and Families (CYPS) providing an overview of the Looked after Children's Strategy 2018-2021 entitled "*We care because you matter*".

The Looked after Children's Strategy and the "promise" to young people were included with the report.

Vicky explained that whilst the core offer is a standalone document, the offer is very much a part of the looked after children strategy and will be embedded within its content.

These documents set out the Local Authorities Strategy as to how it will support and care for looked after children and care leavers and how we will know how well we are doing. The ethos at the centre of this strategy is that as corporate parents we are aspirational for our looked after children and care leavers.

Members watched a video made by Looked after Children. Vicky explained that this was an example of how Young people have been heavily involved in the redesign of the new strategy and for the first time we have been able to secure images of our

own young people within the strategy. Their voice has been a critical part of the development of the strategy and the Young People's Council

The Scrutiny Committee was being asked to review the contents of Looked after Children's Strategy 2018-2021 before it is considered at the Executive meeting on Tuesday 25 September 2018. Full council will be asked to agree to the strategy on the 14th November 2018.

Members were pleased to see the determination to work with districts. In response to questions, Vicky explained that ongoing discussion with all of the districts is planned with an opportunity to discuss what can be offered within their role of corporate parenting responsibilities. The involvement of members in this, as the agenda is moved forward with districts, could be crucial.

During discussion members reached the following views: They –

- Liked that the strategy and the local offer are ambitious for our Looked After children and Young People;
- believed we should strive to ensure the values that underpin that strategic ambition are embedded in the way our staff work with looked after young people;
- acknowledged that such ambition brings challenges in terms of funding pressures;
- strongly supported the drive to encourage partners - especially district councils in relation to leisure use, for example - to do what they can to assist looked after children and care leavers;
- welcomed the consultation undertaken already in respect of both proposals and the plans in place for future engagement - notably the local launches;
- commented favourably on the way the Local Offer is being made accessible for young people;
- supported the notion that a number of members be asked to come forward and, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder and Young Peoples Champion, take an active part in these launches and then, where appropriate, be a point of reference for discussions with district councils;
- recognised that the Voluntary and Community Sector have much to contribute to help secure positive experiences for these young people.

Resolved –

- a) The Committee was pleased to have the opportunity to review the proposed Looked After Strategy and the Local Offer for Care Leavers before they are formally adopted.
- b) The Committee agreed that both are excellent documents.
- c) The Chairman convey the committee's views to the Executive so that these can be taken into account when the Executive meets on Tuesday 25 September 2018.

153. OFSTED Inspection of NYCC Childrens Services

Considered –

The report of the OFSTED inspection of NYCC childrens social care services.

Stuart Carlton introduced the report.

In response, members said staff should be proud to be the first and only authority nationally to have received an 'outstanding' Ofsted grade in every category under a new and challenging social care inspection framework which focuses on the effectiveness of frontline practice.

Resolved –

The committee expressed its appreciation to all involved.

154. Pressure on School Budgets

The Chairman had asked that a briefing come before the committee in the light of the information reported in local media recently that without changes to schools the current projection forecasts that in 3 years 60% of schools in North Yorkshire are expected to be in a deficit position.

Howard Emmet, Assistant Director - Strategic Resources (CYPS), Integrated Finance (CSD) explained that this projected deficit position in North Yorkshire reflects a trend which has occurred across England in recent years. In the period of four years up until 2016-17, the proportion of local authority secondary schools in deficit nearly trebled, expanding to over a quarter of all such schools.

The number of local authority maintained primary schools in deficit has also risen. In 2010-11, 5.2 per cent of local authority primary schools were in deficit; in 2016-17, the proportion of primary schools in deficit increased significantly, to 7.1 per cent. The average primary school deficit also noticeably increased, from £72,042 in 2010-11, to £107,962 in 2016-17.

A conclusion to draw here is that not only are the number of schools in deficit increasing but also the extent to which they are in deficit is rising. Whilst the above information is only for maintain schools, it is a similar picture across the whole sector.

Howard explained that schools are already taking steps to address these issues, as it is not a sustainable position in the long term.

Resolved –

That group spokespersons keep a weather eye on this by receiving regular briefings so that they are in a position to determine, at any time, if this should be brought to the committee's attention.

155. Work Programme

Considered -

The report of the Scrutiny Team Leader inviting comments from Members on the content of the Committee's Programme of Work scheduled for future meetings.

Resolved –

- a) Members again confirmed that:
- b) That the content of the Work Programme report and the Work Programme schedule are noted.

The meeting concluded at 12.30pm
RB