



Council

24 March 2022

Report of the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education

In recent months, the Corporate Director of People and the Assistant Director for Children's Social Care have both moved to work in other authorities. Individually, both Amanda Hatton as Corporate Director and Sophie Wales as Assistant Director have made strong contributions to the Directorate's leadership and management, also to managing the work needed to set in hand and continue improvement work described later in this section; on behalf of the Council, I should like to thank them both for their work.

At the start of October last, it was a privilege to welcome Anne Coyle as Interim Director of Children's Services. In the short time since then, Anne has likewise made a significant contribution to Directorate leadership and management, also by continuing and giving a sharper focus to the improvement work that was already started; again I should like to thank Anne on behalf of the Council for her work to date.

This report is divided into two parts – one which covers Children and Children's Social Care, the other covering York's Schools

Children and the Council

York's Youth Council

For children and young people aged between 11-19 who are not in the Council's care, York Youth Council is a group of young people with passion and the aspiration to make positive changes both to their local community and the lives of young people in York. It consists of young people from a variety of backgrounds with a range of knowledge and experiences and is led by young people; any work it carries out is directed and agreed by the young people, supported and facilitated by members of the Communities Team. The Youth Council meets to discuss issues that are important both its members and to York's children and young people; members they help to organise and support events to capture the views of York young people.

Voice and Participation for Children and Young People in care

Our Children's Rights and Advocacy Service (known as Speak Up) promotes children's rights and provides advocacy for children and young people who are in care or leaving care, on a child protection plan or who want to make a complaint against the council. The service provides issue-based advocacy and only exists for the time it takes to resolve the specific issue; it is intended to give children and young people confidence that, where they are worried or concerned about a service they receive, they are able to say so and to get help.

Helping children and young people in care to articulate their views and feelings

For children in the Council's care, York's Children in Care Council (CiCC) has been made up of two groups: the Show Me That I Matter panel (SMTIM) and the I Still Matter (ISM) Care Leavers Forum. Young people met at the different groups to raise and discuss issues that are important to them. At the start of Covid, the groups were combined into a single SMTIM panel pending a return to the previous structure. The overall aim of the CiCC is to provide an opportunity for care experiencing children and young people to help shape and improve services.

In 2020, Show Me That I Matter was nominated for York Press Community Pride Award, while in 2021, Speak Up (the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service) were 'Highly Commended' for the national Children and Young People Award in the 'biggest impact' category.

A 'U Matter' survey was undertaken between April and July 2021. This survey gives an opportunity for children and young people in or leaving care to feedback to the City of York Council about their experiences of being in care. The full findings of the survey are being shared with the Corporate Parenting Board, which will act on the feedback given by young people.

From the results of the survey, 61% of children and young people reported their experience of being in care as good or very good and 81% reported that they were happy or very happy with where they were living.

Voice of Young People in Care and the Corporate Parenting Board

There is a clear focus on remodelling the Corporate Parenting Board to relate more directly to young people in care and a new constitution is in process of being agreed in the current year. The new model has been developed with the children and young people and it will be supported following the recent recruitment of 'care advisors' (care-experienced young people).

The Children In Care Council group(s) will put forward views and discuss issues in a new Forum (which replaces the former 'Decision Maker's Meeting) with Corporate Parenting advisers and members of a smaller Corporate Parenting Board. The slimmed-down Corporate Parenting Board will then work with partners to respond to changes and solutions requested by the young people. It is anticipated that the new arrangements will strengthen both members' and officers' sense of corporate responsibility for children in care and care leavers.

Early Help

Everyone in York who works with children, young people and families, has a responsibility to support the delivery of Early Help and support children, young people and families in accessing appropriate services.

The City of York Council's Safeguarding Children Partnership has developed a new Early Help Strategy, launching in 2022. The strategy promotes the view that an effective Early Help model is one of collaboration, bringing together families, communities, professionals and systems to work together in a joined up co-ordinated

approach to 'ensure that children, young people and their families receive the right help at the right time'.

The Council's new Customer and Communities Directorate places an emphasis on supporting customers, building resilient communities, recognising that local people are best placed to understand and find solutions to the particular needs of their communities. The Directorate will promote early help for vulnerable families through the co-design of Family Hubs, linked to the Supporting Families agenda to meet the needs of local communities by bringing universal and community services together and making them more accessible for children and families.

With an increased focus on prevention, early help and asset-based community development working across all life stages, this approach also means creating a wide-reaching Early Help network within communities which will involve working with those people who are already supported by services to connect them to their communities.

Effective support to families should involve a 'Team around the child' approach which includes healthy child services, schools, housing, child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) etc. providing assessment of early help needs and a plan of support that is designed around the child and family's needs.

As part of a service restructure in 2021, colleagues in the Local Area Teams early help service, the Immediate Response / Edge of Care service and Child in Need Practitioners have merged together into a Child and Family Targeted Support Service. For children and families who face more challenges and may have multiple needs, the service will provide additional capacity and expertise to address their needs. This will include direct work and one to support with children and families from a Child and Family Support Practitioner.

The Child and Family Targeted Support Service will also work with children and families who may no longer need a Children's Social Care response but could need some extra support to reduce the likelihood of re-entering Children's Social Care in the future (an 'edge of care' situation).

Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)

Following the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission joint area inspection visit in December 2019, a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) was required to address concerns about the effectiveness of the local area. Partners worked together to produce the WSoA by the required date and the plan gained the approval of DfE and NHS advisers, with whom quarterly meetings have been held. Partners have also worked together to deliver the workstreams proposed in the plan. A re-visit to formally check progress is expected in due course.

Children's Social Care & Children and Young People In Care (CYPIC)

A focused visit by Ofsted in July 2019, covering arrangements for children in need of help and protection, made clear the need to strengthen our arrangements for vulnerable children. We continue to recognise and prioritise the needs of children and young people and there is an obsessive level of determination to improve outcomes for children and young people.

In 2020 York launched its new MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub). The MASH's multi-agency team is made up of representatives from a range of services including Social Care, Early Help, Police and Health Professionals and is a single point of contact for all concerns about children. This partnership approach will make it easier to get children, young people and families to get the right level of support as quickly as possible.

Throughout the pandemic, we have responded to changing circumstances to always ensure:

- Children and young people are safe
- Our staff are safe
- That we play our part in controlling the spread of COVID-19

A revised structure for Children's Social Care was introduced in 2021. As we continue to develop our social work practice and "grow our own" social workers, we will create a high functioning sustainable social work service based on the principle that the majority of families do not require a statutory intervention but may need some support to resolve their issues.

This will be achieved through an enhanced Family Group Conference and Mediation service with Targeted family support interventions. Where children do need statutory service interventions, they will be focused, evidence-based, of high quality and time-limited. This will ensure that demand is better managed through the service. We will front-load our approach to permanence, so that viability assessments are undertaken much earlier in the service i.e. in Assessment and Child in Need teams.

The new structure will ensure children are enabled to achieve permanence quickly and, when they are unable to be cared for in their own homes, they will be cared for by skilled carers close to their homes and communities.

York's current CYPIC Population

At the end of January 2022, CoYC had 273 children in care, a rate of 73.8 / 10k of the relevant population against our statistical neighbours' current rate of 62.5 / 10k. Even within broader movements in the population, the numbers can fluctuate quite markedly (it rose from 276 at Q3 end to 283 in early January 2022) and a new family entering the system, bringing several children who need to be taken into care, can have a noticeable effect.

Recent trends in York's CYPIC population:

	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/22 Q3
Number of children in care, excluding Short Breaks - (Snapshot)	208	262	278	276
Children in care per 10k, excluding Short Breaks - (Snapshot)	56.22	70.81	75.14	74.59
Benchmark - National Data	65	67	67	-
Benchmark - Regional Data	74	77	78	-
Benchmark - Comparator Data	61	60.3	62.5	-

York's In-area residential accommodation

The Council's former children's home (Wenlock - managed by Hexagon up to December 2021) has been updated, re-registered at Ofsted with a new manager, and is already in use. Further work on the building should see it be capable of accommodating an increased small number of children or young people, along with a number of young people being housed on a transitional basis in a separate part of the building.

A second property (Ousebank) has also been brought up to date and registered at Ofsted with a new manager; it has already been used to accommodate one young person and is currently available for use. A third property is being developed to provide more such accommodation but this is currently some way from completion. The two newly-registered children's homes have already given the Council more flexibility in dealing with short-term requirements for residential accommodation.

The Beehive – specialist short breaks provision

Replacing The Glen, this Council purpose-built centre was opened in November 2020 and offers a range of short break provision for the most complex children and young people with autism, learning disabilities and/or complex health needs.

Design and service delivery were planned in co-production with children, parents, and partners, with support from the relevant NHS Agencies.

Like The Glen, the Beehive can accommodate up to 8 children at a time, but the new building is purpose-built, much bigger and provides much more flexibility in what can be offered to children and families. Besides the overnight short breaks provision currently on offer, tea visits and day care are provided, while an after school/holiday club is being planned; this allows maximum use of the Beehive, to give the right support to children families at the right time.

York's Schools

A Snapshot of our Schools System

York currently has 63 state schools – 50 primary, 9 secondary, 3 special and 1 maintained nursery school. There are also 8 independent schools covering the age range 2 – 18 years, though none of these is included below.

Overall, 91% of pupils attend 'good' or 'outstanding' schools (89% in primary and 93.4% in secondary)

The city has 6 multi-academy trusts and 60% of schools are academies (32 primary academies, 6 secondary academies and 1 special academy)

Our strategic education partnership board is York School and Academies Board, which has been in place since September 2018.

Achieving for our Children

Besides the YSAB 'York Future' Education Recovery Plan, our priorities are:

- Early Years speech, language and communication (Early Talk for York)
- Pupils in Schools' behaviour, attendance and culture
- Closing the attainment gap (SEND, CiC, CIN)
- Mental health and well-being in settings and schools
- Progression from education, future skills and preparation for adulthood

York Schools and Academies Board (YSAB)

Despite the pandemic, the pace of change in education has continued and York is still seeing the continued development of a diverse school system which includes maintained schools, single academies and multi-academy trusts. Alongside these changes, longstanding loyalties within the York 'family of schools' have engendered a strong commitment to partnership working shared by academies, maintained schools and the local authority alike.

The development of the York Schools and Academies Board (YSAB) has added strength to our city's school improvement arrangements. The Board has brought together the key contributors to the city's schools system in a coherent and effective strategic partnership. YSAB's objectives are to maximise outcomes and improve life chances for York's children and young people, to promote inclusion and reduce inequalities. Critically, the members are committed to using resources collaboratively to ensure that no school and no child or young person will be left behind.

On the Council's behalf, I should like to thank Maxine Squire (Assistant Director of Education and Skills) and her team for their work in achieving a high degree of co-operation and a shared sense of purpose for York's children in their work with the York Schools and Academies Board.

YSAB's Education Futures Recovery Plan

The YSAB Education Futures Group is chaired by Helen Winn (Chief Executive of the Hope Sentamu Learning Trust) and is made up of Head teachers from primary, secondary and special phases, local authority representatives and Multi-Academy Trust representatives; it is working to:

- develop a city-wide education plan;
- support schools and families to 'catch-up', following any lost learning;
- ensure the education offer for the future meets children's individual needs;
- ensure an integrated approach, with services working together.

Working together is crucial in ensuring that the right approach and resources are in place to deliver:

- high quality teaching for all;
- targeted academic support;
- wider strategies to support, early years, gaps in learning, school attendance, enrichment, wellbeing and extending the 'school experience'.

A cross-city survey over summer 2021 sought the views of all children, school staff, parents and carers on this approach. The themes and strategies that have emerged include a common language approach for teaching and learning, additional tutoring and targeted Interventions, specific continuing professional development (CPD) training programmes for staff, speech and language development in early years settings and reading and writing developments. The responses have informed the development of the York Education Futures Plan.

During the pandemic, gaps within special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) provision and outcomes have widened, a trend identified nationally. YSAB will work with the SEND Partnership to ensure the right strategies are implemented for the affected children; this will take place alongside the outcomes of the Inclusion Review and the follow-up work which is described in the Written Statement of Action arising from the December 2019 SEND inspection report.

York's Virtual School

The aim of the Virtual School is to enhance the life opportunities for children and young people in care by supporting their education and enabling them to achieve the best they can. In September 2021, the duties of Virtual Schools was extended to have a strategic oversight of the educational achievement and progress of children known to social care, including Children in Need.

This cohort includes a small number of children with significant psychological wellbeing needs which impact on their engagement with education. The individual circumstances of each child are reviewed and individual action plans to support re-integration with education are put in place to improve oversight for these students.

The Virtual School does not replace the school or educational provision for children or young people in care but is an additional resource which exists to support and challenge all those involved in the education of children and young people in care. It

is involved in or promotes various initiatives to support the educational achievement of children and young people in care, including providing training and advice for schools, council staff and carers.

The virtual school works closely with colleagues within the council and external agencies as part of an integrated, multi-disciplinary approach to supporting children and young people in care.

The virtual school approach is to work with children and young people in care as if they were in a single school, liaising with the schools they attend in order to raise educational attainment, track pupil progress, ensure good school attendance, improve educational stability, promote high aspirations and raise the profile of children in care and ensure that every child in care has a high quality personal education plan.

The Inclusion Review

The number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, particularly those with complex autism and those with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) conditions, is growing. This has led to a need to review current provision and identify areas where provision has to be developed to meet need.

The local authority's Inclusion Review focuses on delivering sufficient provision for children and young people with SEND. Between May and June 2021 the Council ran a city-wide Inclusion Review consultation. The purpose of the consultation was to gain feedback about the current city-wide provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in order to inform proposals about future provision. Running for a period of 4 weeks, it asked about mainstream and specialist provision, and the perceived sufficiency gaps in our current provision. In total over 600 people accessed the consultation documents.

In 2021-22 capital works taking place at Applefields Special School and Danesgate Community will make improvements to both school sites. A further capital plan to support the delivery of sufficient school places for children and young people with SEND between 2022 and 2025 is currently in the process of development. This plan is being co-produced with children and young people, parents and carers, and schools and colleges.

Cllr Ian Cuthbertson

Executive Member for Children, Young People & Education

15th March 2022