

## Notice of a public meeting of

### Children, Culture and Communities Scrutiny Committee

- To:** Councillors Nicholls (Chair), Clarke (Vice-Chair),  
Crawshaw, Cullwick, Cuthbertson, Knight, Nelson,  
K Taylor, Waller, and Wilson
- Date:** Tuesday, 3 December 2024
- Time:** 5.30 pm
- Venue:** West Offices - Station Rise, York YO1 6GA

### AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for Absence**  
To receive and note apologies for absence.
- 2. Declarations of Interest** (Pages 1 - 2)  
At this point in the meeting, Members are asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest or other registerable interest they might have in respect of business on this agenda, if they have not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests. The disclosure must include the nature of the interest.

An interest must also be disclosed in the meeting when it becomes apparent to the member during the meeting.

[Please see attached sheet for further guidance for Members]

- 3. Minutes** (Pages 3 - 8)  
To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2024.

- 4. Public Participation**  
At this point in the meeting members of the public who have registered to speak can do so. Members of the public may speak on agenda items or on matters within the remit of the committee.

**Please note that our registration deadlines are set as 2 working days before the meeting, in order to facilitate the management of public participation at our meetings.** The deadline for registering at this meeting is **5:00pm on Friday, 29 November 2024.**

To register to speak please visit [www.york.gov.uk/AttendCouncilMeetings](http://www.york.gov.uk/AttendCouncilMeetings) to fill in an online registration form. If you have any questions about the registration form or the meeting, please contact Democratic Services. Contact details can be found at the foot of this agenda.

### **Webcasting of Public Meetings**

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During coronavirus, we made some changes to how we ran council meetings, including facilitating remote participation by public speakers. See our updates ([www.york.gov.uk/COVIDDemocracy](http://www.york.gov.uk/COVIDDemocracy)) for more information on meetings and decisions.

- 5. Finance and Performance Q2** (Pages 9 - 34)  
This report sets out the projected 2024/25 financial position and the performance position for the period covering 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024.

- 6. York Explore Annual Update** (Pages 35 - 46)  
This report provides members with an annual update from Explore Libraries and Archives Mutual Limited (Explore) who operate the council's libraries and archives service.
- 7. Placement Sufficiency** (Pages 47 - 84)  
This report outlines responsibilities in accordance with Section 22G of Children Act 1989, to ensure there are enough homes for children in the care of the local authority.
- 8. Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report** (Pages 85 - 122)  
This report presents the 2023/24 Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Board, highlighting the progress made in achieving the aspirations outlined in the Corporate Parenting Strategy, and reflects on the Board's work over the past year.
- 9. Work Plan** (Pages 123 - 126)  
Members are asked to consider the Committee's work plan for the 2024/25 municipal year.
- 10. Urgent Business**  
Any other business which the Chair considers urgent under the Local Government Act 1972.

Democratic Services Officer

Reece Williams

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Ta informacja może być dostarczona w twoim własnym języku. (Polish)

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**Declarations of Interest – guidance for Members**

- (1) Members must consider their interests, and act according to the following:

<b>Type of Interest</b>	<b>You must</b>
Disclosable Pecuniary Interests	Disclose the interest, not participate in the discussion or vote, and leave the meeting <u>unless</u> you have a dispensation.
Other Registrable Interests (Directly Related) <b>OR</b> Non-Registrable Interests (Directly Related)	Disclose the interest; speak on the item <u>only if</u> the public are also allowed to speak, but otherwise not participate in the discussion or vote, and leave the meeting <u>unless</u> you have a dispensation.
Other Registrable Interests (Affects) <b>OR</b> Non-Registrable Interests (Affects)	Disclose the interest; remain in the meeting, participate and vote <u>unless</u> the matter affects the financial interest or well-being: (a) to a greater extent than it affects the financial interest or well-being of a majority of inhabitants of the affected ward; and (b) a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest. In which case, speak on the item <u>only if</u> the public are also allowed to speak, but otherwise do not participate in the discussion or vote, and leave the meeting <u>unless</u> you have a dispensation.

- (2) Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to the Member concerned or their spouse/partner.
- (3) Members in arrears of Council Tax by more than two months must not vote in decisions on, or which might affect, budget calculations, and must disclose at the meeting that this restriction applies to them. A failure to comply with these requirements is a criminal offence under section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

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## City of York Council

## Committee Minutes

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Meeting	Children, Culture and Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date	5 November 2024
Present	Councillors Nicholls (Chair), Clarke (Vice-Chair), Cullwick, Cuthbertson, Knight, K Taylor, Waller, Wilson [until 7:30pm], Baxter (Substitute for Cllr Nelson), and Melly (Substitute for Cllr Crawshaw)
Apologies	Councillors Crawshaw, and Nelson
Officers in attendance	Martin Kelly – Director of Children and Education Maxine Squire – Assistant Director, Education and Skills Pauline Stuchfield – Director of Housing and Communities Laura Williams – Assistant Director, Customer, Communities and Inclusion
Executive Members in attendance	Councillor Webb – Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education Councillor Pavlovic – Executive Member for Housing, Planning and Safer Communities
External attendees in attendance	Eloise Tann – Representative from University of Leeds Louise Dye – Representative from University of Leeds Aniela Wenham – Representative from University of York Rebecca Kerr - Representative from University of York Katherine Smith - Representative from University of York John Hudson - Representative from University of York

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**23. Apologies for Absence (5:30pm)**

The committee received apologies from Councillors Crawshaw and Nelson, who were substituted respectively by Councillors Melly and Baxter.

**24. Declarations of Interest (5:32pm)**

Councillor Waller declared an interest in relation to item 5 on the agenda, Free School Meal Pilot Year Review, in that he was a Governor at Westfield Primary School.

**25. Minutes (5:32pm)**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

**26. Public Participation (5:33pm)**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

**27. Free School Meals Pilot Year Review (5:33pm)**

The Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education, and the Assistant Director, Education and Skills, presented their report and introduced to the meeting the representatives from the universities of Leeds and York.

The Assistant Director, Education and Skills noted that the Hungry Minds Pilot Scheme started in January 2024 and that Westfield Primary School was the largest primary school in York, and Burton Green Primary School was one of the smallest, which demonstrated the capability of the scheme to work within different settings. Westfield Primary School was chosen to start the pilot scheme due to its recent kitchen upgrades and already high uptake of free school meals.



The representatives from the University of Leeds presented their presentation as seen in the agenda supplement 'Presentation Slides for York Free School Meals Pilot Year Review, University of Leeds', and it was reported that:

- Studies had concluded that hunger had an impact on children's attainment and wellbeing.
- Through tracking attendance, the pilot scheme saw a steady increase in attendance through two terms, and lateness had decreased.
- Uptake of free school meals (FSM) had increased from 40-60% following the scheme.
- A decrease in the experience of bad behaviour had been seen.

The representatives from the University of York presented their presentation as seen in the agenda supplement 'Presentation Slides for York Free School Meals Pilot Year Review, University of York', and it was reported that:

- The scheme had experienced challenges with its communication in regard to its expectations of what the scheme could achieve, as well as from increased politicisation of the scheme through the local press.
- The universality of the scheme had reduced the stigma seen relating to FSM, but a bigger cohort size through expansion of the scheme could see stigma reduced further.

In response to questions from members, the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education, Assistant Director, Education and Skills, and representatives from the universities of Leeds and York confirmed that:

- In the summer it was usually seen that attendance would drop, however this was not seen throughout the schools involved in the pilot.
- The pilot would undoubtedly have a positive financial impact on families who would not have been eligible for FSM prior to the scheme.
- Psychological tools could be used to support children in choosing healthier food options without reducing the amount of exciting food offered, reducing FSM uptake, or increasing food waste.
- Through ongoing reviews of the scheme, data will be gathered to understand seasonal changes in attendance and FSM uptake.

- The introduction of this scheme in early 2024 could be beneficial to the introduction of a Government national school breakfast scheme as City of York Council (CYC) would already have knowledge and experience on the rollout of universal FSM.
- A School Survey from Leeds showed that childcare provision was a big contributor to families taking-up FSM.
- Expansion of the scheme would be considered on the basis of sustainability, which schools were in best position to take the scheme on, and how the scheme could support those most in need.
- The Executive had committed to supporting Westfield Primary School through the scheme throughout their term in administration.
- Plans were not yet in place for the scheme to be expanded to secondary schools as it was essential to get the scheme right for primary schools first. However, it was also first important to consider how many eligible families for FSM in secondary schools were not receiving FSM, and investigating how take-up of this could be improved.
- Studies were done in consultation with families and an increase in male parent and child engagement would support further studies.

The Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education noted that donations to the York Hungry Minds project were accepted and could be done online.

Members thanked the representatives from the universities of Leeds and York for their time, and their work on the report and presentations seen in the agenda supplements.

Resolved: That members supported the work of the York Hungry Minds Project and asked that the Executive member for Children, Young People, and Education continues to work with the steering group to expand to project to deliver breakfast at two additional schools during 2025.

Reason: The expansion of the universal breakfast offer would provide valuable support to low income families and ensure that more children were able to gain the benefits achieved in the pilot schools.

## **28. Locality Model - York Neighbourhood Model (7:09pm)**

The Director of Housing and Communities, and Assistant Director, Customer, Communities and Inclusion presented the report, and highlighted that the neighbourhood model was designed to increase collaboration between partners and bring services closer to communities.

Members discussed the report and provided the following feedback to Officers:

- More clarity was needed to demonstrate the support residents could receive in their local area.
- Having a central grouping within the four areas of the model was not practical, as many areas grouped together did not share similar characteristics, and many residents from the other areas would need to travel through the central area to receive other services.

The Chair moved that the committee supported the devolution of services within the Neighbourhood Model and welcomed further scrutiny on detailed proposals, this was seconded by Councillor Baxter, and it was;

Resolved:

- That further data which would be included within the report to be received by Executive on 12 December 2024 also be shared with members.
- That the committee supported the devolution of services within the Neighbourhood Model and welcomed further scrutiny on detailed proposals.

**29. Work Plan (8:00pm)**

Members discussed the committee's workplan and it was;

Resolved: That the York Explore Annual Update originally scheduled to be received by members during this meeting, be deferred to the meeting scheduled for 3 December 2024.

Reason: To keep the committee's work plan for the 2024/25 municipal year updated.

Cllr Nicholls, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 8.02 pm].



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## **Children, Culture and Communities Scrutiny Committee 3 December 2024**

Report of Richard Hartle, Head of Children & Education Finance and Ian Cunningham, Head of Business Intelligence

### **2024/25 Finance and Performance Monitor 2**

#### **Summary**

1. This report sets out the projected 2024/25 financial position and the performance position for the period covering 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024. This is the second report of the financial year and assesses performance against budgets, including progress in delivering the Council's savings programme.
2. This report outlines the Council's continued challenging financial position with a forecast overspend for 2024/25 of £2.7m which is a huge improvement on the c£11m forecast overspend we have previously seen at this stage in the financial year. There has also been an increase in the forecast for Adult Social Care, and the forecast also assumes we can release some earmarked reserves to offset the overall position.
3. However, this is still a forecast overspend and therefore, whilst it is incredibly positive that the position is much improved, there remains a great deal of work still to do. It remains clear that the Council cannot afford to keep spending at this level. The general reserve is £6.9m and, whilst we have other earmarked reserves that we could call on if required, continued overspending will quickly see the Council exhaust its reserves.
4. As outlined in previous reports, the existing cost control measures remain in place, and further action is needed to bring spending down to an affordable level, both within the current financial year and over the next 3 years, to safeguard the Council's financial resilience and stability. The impact that this work is having can be clearly seen in this latest forecast and the Council's track record of delivering savings, along with robust financial management, provides a sound platform to continue to be able to deal with future challenges.

5. If we continue to take action and make any difficult decisions now, this will ensure the future financial stability of the Council and that we can continue to provide services for our residents. It is vital that mitigations are delivered, and the forecast overspend is reduced.
6. The Council implemented a garden waste subscription scheme in August 2024 (this was charged on a pro-rata basis). In 2025, the garden waste subscription service will run for the full 40 week season for 40 weeks (operating from Monday 3rd March to Friday 5th December). The Council will contact subscribers early in the New Year to advise of the 2025 subscription fee and with instructions on how to purchase their licences. As this is before budget council it is necessary to agree the fee in advance. For the 2025/26 financial year, it is proposed that the charge for 2024/25 will be £49. This is expected to produce an additional £100k compared to the current fee which will support overall savings. The service also hope to expand the subscription scheme in 2025 to some new build housing estates that were never previously served by a kerbside garden waste collection service (e.g. Langley Gate development etc).
7. Local government continues to be in challenging times, with worsening performance in a number of sectors nationally. The majority of performance indicators chosen to support and monitor the Council Plan in York, continue to show a generally positive and stable trend against this difficult financial picture and shows the hard work from staff, partners and the city to tackle these challenges.
8. This set of indicators are the high-level measurable element of our performance framework, and in newly available data up to Q2 there has been positive performance in areas such as; **Health inequalities in wards** where we have seen further improvements in the expected level of development in children at 2-2.5 years, the number of **children in temporary accommodation** continues to be lower than previous years, our **building services indicators** continue to show a positive direction of travel with a high percentage of repairs completed on first visit alongside the low number of void properties and an increasing percentage of dwellings with an energy rating in the A-C band in the EPC register, and the **number of FOIs, EIRs, and Complaints** responded to in-time show positive performance at responding to customers in timely manner.

9. Alongside the Council plan indicators there are a number of areas of positive performance from across the Council. Nearly 39,000 eligible households in York have now subscribed to the new **Garden Waste Subscription scheme**, which is 55% of eligible households and above the initial target of 33,000 households. The cities **Purple Flag Status** was renewed in Summer 2024, recognising the high standards in safety, diversity, cleanliness and vibrancy and recent **Tourism data** is very positive and shows that hotel room occupancy was 85% in July and footfall in the city centre was over 750,000 visits in August. The **Corporate Improvement Framework** which builds on existing strengths with a view to continuous improvement being central to how the council operates has shown recent positive trends in the continued reduced spend on agency staff, a high percentage of FOIs, EIRs, and Complaints responded to in-time, and a wide variety of ideas received in response to the new staff ideas system.
10. To support our most vulnerable residents we have been **Preparing for statutory inspections** such as any future CQC inspection of the Adult Social Care system in York. New performance management information has been made available to the service on waiting lists and timescales for assessments to help the service on its improvement journey, and there has been positive feedback from customers shown by the **low numbers of complaints** received in this area and improved **Joint working**, where there has been an increase this financial year in the number of people in receipt of adult social care packages that are jointly funded under Continuing Health Care or Vulnerable Person Unit provision by the NHS and CYC, to around 250 people.
11. **Population predictions** and data from POPPI/PANSI show that there is going to be a higher % of older people and individuals with learning needs in York in forthcoming years. In response to this and other challenges, City of York Council has agreed **Specialist housing for disabled adults or adults with learning disabilities** where 14 new homes in Acomb to meet the need for specialist housing for disabled adults or adults with learning disabilities in the community have been agreed, and a new **SEND Hub** for children and young people with special educational needs at Clifton Children's Centre was approved in September. The hub will bring together professionals from education, health and social care to provide families with advice and support, reducing unnecessary assessments and waiting times, and help to tackle the rising requests for EHCP assessments in York (188 in the first 5 months of 2024-25) and the number of children and young people with an EHCP (1,436 at the end of June 2024).

12. Over £2.4m has been secured to help fund a new 24/7 adults **Mental health hub** in York over the next two years, run by a team of NHS and volunteer staff, offering support with no referral required. This will help to tackle a number of areas; recent data shows a reduction in the number of suicides in York in the most recent three-year period, compared to the previous period, and the overall number of households in temporary accommodation in York has reduced during 2023-24 with York continuing to perform positively compared to benchmarked authorities. **Childcare reforms** have been announced and a report was presented to Executive in September 2024 on the commissioning of new and expanded places for childcare reforms to help parents with early years childcare and provide more children with access to high quality early years education. In 2023, **KS4 data** showed strong performance for York pupils compared with national averages and a high proportion of 5 year olds achieved a good level of development compared to national and regional averages. However, challenges remain as the **gap between disadvantaged pupils** and their peers at KS4 widened in York and nationally, and a legacy of Covid-19 is that school attendance of disadvantaged groups continues to be slower to recover.
13. We are listening to residents within **Our Big Budget Conversation**, a consultation on budget priorities taking place over 4 stages during 2024-25 with stage 2 concluding at the end of Q2 with over 1000 responses. The annual **Tenant Satisfaction survey** was sent to all council tenants in September 2024, where over 7000 households have been asked about their views on services. York remains committed to improving stock condition and tenant experiences, and results from the 2023-24 Regulator for Social Housing return are due for publication on the York Open Data platform in November 2024.

## **Background**

### **Financial Summary and Mitigation Strategy**

14. The current forecast is that there will be an overspend of £2.7m. This is despite the additional budget allocated through the 2024/25 budget process and ongoing action being taken by managers across the Council to try and reduce expenditure. Of particular concern, is the increase in forecast overspend across Adult Social Care, where the predicted outturn has increased by £2.4m. However, actions are being taken within the directorate to mitigate against this increased forecast overspend.



15. If the Council continues to spend at the current level, and no action is taken, then we will continue to overspend and will exhaust our reserves and any other available funding. The current level of expenditure is unaffordable and therefore we must continue the work started in the previous financial year to identify and take the necessary actions to reduce expenditure.
16. As outlined in previous reports to Executive, we have continued to see recurring overspends across both Adult and Children's Social Care. However, the underspends and mitigations that have allowed us to balance the budget at year end have generally been one off. Whilst the use of reserves to fund an overspend is appropriate as a one-off measure, it does not remove the need to identify ongoing savings to ensure the overall position is balanced. The budget report considered by Executive in February 2024 also included an assessment of risks associated with the budget, which included the need to secure further savings and effectively manage cost pressures.
17. Members will be aware that the financial position of local government is a national challenge and that the pressures being seen across both Adult and Children's Social Care are not something that is unique to York. Many Councils are experiencing significant financial pressures and struggling to balance their budgets now, so it is vital that we continue the work started last year to reduce our expenditure down to a sustainable level both within the current financial year and over the medium term.
18. On 30<sup>th</sup> October, the Chancellor announced the first budget of the new Government. Whilst we will need to await the draft local government settlement in December for detailed allocations of any funding to York, there was a confirmation that there are plans to reform local authority funding (especially distribution) in 2026/27 "to ensure it reflects an up to date assessment of need and local revenues". This is both an opportunity and a risk to our medium term finances, given our position as one of the lowest funded councils in the country.
19. Given the scale of the financial challenge, and the expected impact on budgets in future years, it is vital that every effort is made to balance the overall position. It is recognised that this will require difficult decisions to be made to protect services for vulnerable residents.

20. Corporate control measures are in place, but it is possible that they will not deliver the scale of reduction needed within the year. Other savings proposals, including service reductions, may also be needed. Officers will continue to carefully monitor spend, identify further mitigation, and review reserves and other funding to make every effort to reduce this forecast position. However, it is possible that it will not be reduced to the point that the outturn will be within the approved budget. The Council has £6.9m of general reserves that would need to be called on if this were the case. As outlined in previous reports, any use of the general reserve would require additional savings to be made in the following year to replenish the reserve and ensure it remains at the recommended minimum level.
21. The delivery of savings plans continues to be a clear priority for all officers during the year. Corporate Directors and Directors will keep Executive Members informed of progress on a regular basis.

### Financial Analysis

22. The Council's net budget is £149m. Following on from previous years, the challenge of delivering savings continues with c£14m to be achieved to reach a balanced budget. The latest forecasts indicate the Council is facing net financial pressures of £2.7m and an overview of this forecast, on a directorate by directorate basis, is outlined in Table 1 below.

Service area	Net budget £'000	2024/25 Forecast Variation £'000
Children & Education	28,659	1,111
Adult Social Care & Integration	45,307	3,286
Transport, Environment & Planning	23,464	-610
Housing & Communities	6,614	790
Corporate & Central Services	44,648	-132
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>148,692</b>	<b>4,445</b>
Contingency	576	-576
Use of earmarked reserves		-1,089
<b>Total including contingency</b>	<b>149,268</b>	<b>2,780</b>

Table 1: Finance overview

## Directorate Analysis

### Children and Education

23. The forecast outturn position for the services covered by this committee is an overspend totalling £1,432k and the table below summarises the latest forecasts by service area.

2024/25 Monitor 1 Variation £000		2024/25 Latest Approved Budget			2024/25 Projected Outturn Variation	
		Gross Spend £000	Income £000	Net Spend £000	£000	%
	<b>Children &amp; Education</b>					
+1,396	Children's Safeguarding	25,659	1,149	24,510	+1,033	+4.2%
+3	Education & Skills	19,073	5,026	14,047	+135	+1.0%
-19	School Funding & Assets	176,104	181,836	-5,732	-35	-0.6%
-22	Director of C&E & Central Budgets	1,685	5,851	-4,166	-22	-0.5%
<b>+1,359</b>	<b>C&amp;E Directorate Total</b>	<b>222,521</b>	<b>193,862</b>	<b>28,659</b>	<b>+1,111</b>	<b>+3.9%</b>
+333	Culture & Communities	13,262	6,479	6,783	+321	+4.7%
<b>+1,692</b>	<b>CC&amp;C Scrutiny Total</b>	<b>235,783</b>	<b>200,341</b>	<b>35,442</b>	<b>+1,432</b>	<b>+4.0%</b>

24. For Children & Education, the overspend of £1.1m that is being projected at this monitor, whilst still a concern, represents a significant and continuing improvement in the financial position of the directorate. At the same stage in 2022/23 the projected unmitigated overspend stood at £8.7m, reducing to £4.6m in 2023/24. This reflects the considerable progress that has been made within the directorate to manage spend in a number of key areas, particularly; agency staffing, high cost placements and home to school transport.
25. As previously reported, the number of Children Looked After (CLA) in York has consistently been at a higher level than the budget was built to accommodate. The number at the beginning of the financial year was 243, at the end of July it was still 243. Placement budgets are predicted to be overspent by a total of £914k. The pressure on this budget is partly due to the limited market for children's placements and the statutory requirements placed on local authorities to meet children's

needs, coupled with inflationary pressures which could continue to worsen the position. Total growth of £1,647k has been allocated to the placements budgets in 2024/25.

26. Safeguarding Interventions is predicted to underspend by 67k due to staffing vacancies. In addition, legal fees are predicted to overspend by £135k.
27. An overspend in Disabled Children's Services of £476k is mainly overspends on direct payments. A specific project for direct payments is being carried out, and this is predicted to clawback some of previous payments made and reduce ongoing costs.
28. Innovation and Children's Champion is predicted to underspend by - £160k (-£137k in 2023/24). This is due to the ability to fund some expenditure from the Family Hubs grant & Family Seeing Grant.
29. The Home to School Transport budget, which has been in an overspend position for a number of years, has been allocated £730k of growth for demographic pressures and contract inflation.
30. At this point in the financial year, an overspend of £50k is predicted. This is a change from Monitor 1 as there has been an amendment to the projected taxi expenditure to take account of the increased number of days in the 2024/25 financial year when transport will be required. This is due to the Easter break for 2025 being wholly in the financial year 2025/26. The impact of this is an extra five days of transport in 2024/25 at an estimated cost of £65k. This increase has been offset by a lower than assumed taxi cost by £15k in July 2024.
31. The projected outturn includes an estimate of likely contractual inflation from 1st September 2024, and the final increase will be dependent on the relevant indices at that point. In addition, at this point in the financial year, the financial impact of changes for the new academic year are not known until all eligible pupils have their travel arrangements confirmed in September so this position could change once all new academic year information on cost is available.
32. Staff resourcing issues and turnover in the SEND Statutory Services Team, and the need to resource work to progress the Safety Valve targets have continued and resulted in the need to appoint a number of agency staff and also increase supporting resources, resulting in a predicted overspend of £65k based on current staffing assumptions.

33. The Educational Psychologists Service is now predicted to overspend by £57k. This is a change from the position previously reported (an underspend of £65k due to continuing vacancies in the team) and is because of the need to commission external agency support to clear a backlog of assessments at a cost of £122k.
34. The Effectiveness and Achievement Service and the Skills Service are both predicted to outturn at or very close to budget.
35. An overall underspend of £49k is now predicted within the Virtual School and Inclusion service, due to a vacancy, one-off savings in non-staffing expenditure and additional grant funding supporting already committed expenditure.
36. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is ahead of the target position set out in the Safety Valve recovery plan agreed with the DfE. The local authority is now in the third year of this four year agreement and has exceeded the financial targets for the first two years.
37. The brought forward balance on the DSG as at 1 April 2024 was a deficit of £291k. The initial year end projection for 2024/25 is for a cumulative deficit of approximately £780k, although this is subject to change as new academic year details of provision are confirmed. This increased deficit is despite the LA expecting to receive almost £1.5m of further Safety Valve funding during the year and is indicative of the increasing pressures and demands being placed on LAs to provide for High Needs pupils.
38. In common with the national picture, York is continuing to experience an increase in High Needs pupils together with an increasing complexity of need, often requiring expensive provision, especially in Post 16 and Post 19 provision and the education element of Out of Authority placements. In particular York is facing a significant increase in demand for special school places, often exacerbated by tribunal decisions.
39. In addition, due to the significant pressures on mainstream school budgets, it is becoming increasingly difficult for High needs pupils to be supported in these settings. This situation is particularly difficult in York due to the low level of school funding which has a significant impact on these schools ability to adequately meet the needs of High Needs pupils.

40. The Safety Valve agreement commits the local authority to bring the DSG into an in-year balanced position by 2025/26. Further payments are conditional on the local authority meeting the targets set out in the Management Plan, and reporting quarterly to the DfE on progress, with the eventual aim of eliminating the in-year deficit by the target date, with additional payments by the DfE eliminating the historic deficit at that point.
41. As a result of the above, this third year of the Safety Valve agreement is likely to be the most difficult to date, with an increasing risk of the LA being unable to meet the target of eliminating the cumulative deficit by the end of 2025/26 as set out in the original agreement. Officers are working hard to avoid this position, but it is becoming increasingly challenging to achieve.
42. Within Communities the main pressure relates to the £300k library saving. The council is undertaking due process to work with Explore to consider options that can be included into the contract that will deliver a saving. The process does require time to review provision levels as well as consultation and agreement from the partners. There remains an aspiration to gain a full saving from the process but the timeline and level of in year saving is in question.

### **Performance – Service Delivery**

43. This performance report is based upon the city outcome and council delivery indicators included in the Performance Framework for the Council Plan (2023-2027) which was launched in September 2023. Wider or historic strategic and operational performance information is published quarterly on the Council's open data platform; [www.yorkopendata.org.uk](http://www.yorkopendata.org.uk)
44. The Executive for the Council Plan (2023-2027) agreed a core set of indicators to help monitor the Council priorities and these provide the structure for performance updates in this report. Some indicators are not measured on a quarterly basis and the DoT (Direction of Travel) is calculated on the latest three results whether they are annual or quarterly.

45. A summary of the city outcome and council delivery indicators by council plan theme are shown in the paragraphs below along with the latest data for the core indicator set.

Health and wellbeing: A health generating city (City)						
	Previous Data	Latest Data	DoT	Frequency	Benchmarks	Data Next Available
Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI)	0.12 (2022/23)	0.1 (2023/24)	↓ Good	5 yearly	National Rank 2023/24: 253	2024/25 data available in December 2024
Number of children in temporary accommodation - (Snapshot)	63 (2022/23)	45 (2023/24)	↓ Good	Quarterly	Not available	Q1 2024/25 data available in November 2024
%pt gap between disadvantaged pupils (eligible for FSM in the last 6 years, looked after and adopted from care) and their peers achieving 9-4 in English & Maths at KS4	32.00% (2021/22)	43.60% (2022/23)	↑ Bad	Annual	National Data 2022/23 43.30%	2023/24 data available in December 2024
% of reception year children recorded as being overweight (incl. obese) (single year)	22.70% (2021/22)	19.90% (2022/23)	→	Annual	National Data 2022/23 21.31%	2023/24 data available in November 2024
% of adults (aged 16+) that are physically active (150+ moderate intensity equivalent minutes per week, excl. gardening)	70.4% (2022/23)	69.8% (2023/24)	→	Annual	National Data 2023/24 63.4%	2024/25 data available in April 2025
The DoT (Direction of Travel) is calculated on the latest three data points whether they are annual or quarterly. All historic data is available via the Open Data Platform						

46. **Number of children in temporary accommodation** – at the end of 2023-24, there were 45 children in temporary accommodation in York which, although an increase from 39 children the previous quarter, is a reduction from 63 at the end of 2022-23. The majority of these children are in stable family setups, do not show evidence of achieving worse outcomes, and York continues to report no households with children housed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation.
47. **%pt gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers achieving 9-4 in English and Maths at KS4** – The gap at age 16 widened in York and Nationally to 43% in summer 2023. A legacy of Covid-19 is that school attendance of disadvantaged groups has been slower to recover, and has been worse than for the same group nationally. The work currently being undertaken through the Attendance Graduated Response is seeing improvements in attendance. Data for 2023-24 will be available in December 2024.

48. **% of reception year children recorded as being overweight (incl. obese) –** The participation rates for the National Child Measurement Programmes (NCMP) in York for 2022-23 were 97.2% for reception aged children and 95.1% for Year 6 pupils.
- The 2022-23 NCMP found that 19.9% of reception aged children in York were overweight (including obese), compared with 21.3% in England and 22.5% in the Yorkshire and Humber region. York has the second lowest rate of overweight (including obese) for reception aged children in the Yorkshire and Humber region.
  - Of Year 6 children in York, 32.5% were overweight (including obese) in 2022-23 compared with 36.6% in England and 38.1% in the Yorkshire and Humber region. York has the lowest rate of overweight (including obese) for Year 6 children in the Yorkshire and Humber region.
49. **% of adults (aged 16+) that are physically active –** The latest data from the Adult Active Lives Survey for the period from mid-November 2022 to mid-November 2023 was published in April 2024. Data for 2024-25 will be available in April 2025. In York, 515 people aged 16 and over took part in the survey, and they reported higher levels of physical activity, and lower levels of physical inactivity, compared with the national and regional averages. Positively:
- 69.8% of people in York did more than 150 minutes of physical activity per week compared with 63.4% nationally and 61.7% regionally. There has been no significant change in the York value from that 12 months earlier.
  - 18.8% of people in York did fewer than 30 minutes per week compared with 25.7% nationally and 27.7% regionally. There has been no significant change in the York value from that 12 months earlier.

Health and wellbeing: A health generating city (Council)						
	Previous Data	Latest Data	DoT	Frequency	Benchmarks	Data Next Available
Number of children in care, excluding Short Breaks - (Snapshot)	243 (Q1 2024/25)	232 (Q2 2024/25)	➔	Quarterly	National Data 2022/23 71	Q3 2024/25 data available in January 2025
Number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan - (Snapshot)	141 (Q1 2024/25)	139 (Q2 2024/25)	➔	Quarterly	National Data 2022/23 43.2	Q3 2024/25 data available in January 2025
The DoT (Direction of Travel) is calculated on the latest three data points whether they are annual or quarterly. All historic data is available via the Open Data Platform						



50. **Children and young people in care per 10k, excluding short breaks** – At the end of September 2024, 232 children and young people were in York’s care, with a steady reduction from 262 in March 2023. As a rate per 10k population, this is below the national average and within York’s expected range. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC), a sub-group of children in care, are expected to increase in number in York. However, at the end of September, 15 of York’s children in care were UASC, compared to 18 in March 2024. The National Transfer Scheme now mandates that “the Home Office will not transfer UASC to an authority that is already looking after UASC in line with, or greater than, 0.1% of their child population”. For York, this is equivalent to approximately 34 young people.
51. **Children subject to a Child Protection Plan** – 139 children were the subject of a Child Protection Plan at the end of September 2024. As a rate per 10k population, York remains below the most recently released National average. The number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan in York is within York’s expected range (133-150).

Education and Skills: High quality skills and learning for all (City)						
	Previous Data	Latest Data	DoT	Frequency	Benchmarks	Data Next Available
% of working age population qualified to at least L2 and above (New methodology from 2022/23)	94.2% (2022/23)	90% (2023/24)	➡	Annual	National Data 2023/24: 86.5%	2024/25 data available in May 2025
% of working age population qualified to at least L4 and above (New methodology from 2022/23)	60.3% (2022/23)	53.8% (2023/24)	➡	Annual	National Data 2023/24: 47.3%	2024/25 data available in May 2025
% of pupils achieving 9-4 or above in English & Maths at KS4 (C or above before 2016/17)	75.30% (2021/22)	70.20% (2022/23)	➡	Annual	National Data 2022/23 65.30%	2023/24 data available in December 2024
The DoT (Direction of Travel) is calculated on the latest three data points whether they are annual or quarterly. All historic data is available via the Open Data Platform						

52. **% of working age population qualified to at least L2 and above** – In 2023-24, 90% of the working age population in York were qualified to at least L2 and above (GCSE grades 9-4), which is higher than the national and regional figures (86.5% and 85.1% respectively). This result ranks the city of York first regionally. This latest figure is a slight decrease from 2022-23 (94.2%). It should be noted that there has been a slight change in methodology from 2022-23. Data for 2024-25 will be available in May 2025.
53. **% of working age population qualified to at least L4 and above** – In 2023-24, 53.8% of the working age population in York were qualified to at least L4 and above (certificate of higher education or equivalent), which is higher than the national and regional figures (47.3% and

41.2% respectively). This result ranks the city of York fourth regionally. The 2023-24 figure is a decrease from 2022-23 (60.3%) but higher than in previous years. Data for 2024-25 will be available in May 2025.

54. **% of pupils achieving 9-4 or above in English and Maths at KS4 –** DfE data shows strong performance for York pupils when compared with National averages. In 2022-23, 70.2% of York's Year 11s achieved grades 9-4 in English and Maths (considered a standard pass), compared to 65.3% Nationally. Data for 2023-24 will be available in December 2024.

Education and Skills: High quality skills and learning for all (Council)						
	Previous Data	Latest Data	DoT	Frequency	Benchmarks	Data Next Available
% of children who have achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD) at Foundation Stage - (Snapshot)	70.90% (2021/22)	69.70% (2022/23)	⇒	Annual	National Data 2022/23 67.20%	2023/24 data available in December 2024
Number of children who are eligible for a free school meal in the primary sector (excluding Danesgate) - (Jan Census snapshot)	2,197 (2022/23)	2,320 (2023/24)	⇒	Annual	Not available	2024/25 data available in July 2025
% of children who are eligible for a free school meal in the primary sector (excluding Danesgate)	15.88% (2022/23)	16.99% (2023/24)	⇒	Annual	National Data 2023/24 24.29%	2024/25 data available in July 2025
Number of children who are eligible and taking a free school meal in the primary sector (excluding Danesgate) - (Jan Census snapshot)	1,760 (2022/23)	1,938 (2023/24)	⇒	Annual	Not available	2024/25 data available in July 2025
% of children taking a free school meal in the primary sector (excluding Danesgate) - (Jan Census snapshot)	12.72% (2022/23)	14.19% (2023/24)	⇒	Annual	Not available	2024/25 data available in July 2025
Number of children who are eligible for a free school meal in the secondary sector (excluding Danesgate) - (Jan Census snapshot)	1,621 (2022/23)	1,729 (2023/24)	⇒	Annual	Not available	2024/25 data available in July 2025
% of children who are eligible for a free school meal in the secondary sector (excluding Danesgate)	14.26% (2022/23)	15.15% (2023/24)	⇒	Annual	National Data 2023/24 24.12%	2024/25 data available in July 2025
Number of children who are eligible and taking a free school meal in the secondary sector (excluding Danesgate) - (Jan Census snapshot)	1,159 (2022/23)	1,299 (2023/24)	⇒	Annual	Not available	2024/25 data available in July 2025
% of children taking a free school meal in the secondary sector (excluding Danesgate) - (Jan Census snapshot)	10.20% (2022/23)	11.38% (2023/24)	⇒	Annual	Not available	2024/25 data available in July 2025
Total number of children who are eligible for a free school meal - (York LA Local Measure) - (Jan Census snapshot)	3,985 (2022/23)	4,246 (2023/24)	⇒	Annual	Not available	2024/25 data available in July 2025
Total number of children who are eligible and taking a free school meal - (York LA Local Measure) - (Jan Census snapshot)	2,987 (2022/23)	3,289 (2023/24)	↑ Good	Annual	Not available	2024/25 data available in July 2025
Total number of active EHCPs overseen by SEND Services (Snapshot)	1,436 (Q1 2024/25)	1,447 (July 2024)	⇒	Monthly	Not available	Q2 2024/25 data available in November 2024
The DoT (Direction of Travel) is calculated on the latest three data points whether they are annual or quarterly. All historic data is available via the Open Data Platform						

55. **% of children who have achieved a Good Level of Development at Foundation Stage** – In 2022-23, 69.7% of our 5-year-olds achieved a Good Level of Development compared to 67.2% Nationally, and 66.2% in Yorkshire and Humber. Data for 2023-24 will be available in December 2024.

Housing: Increasing the supply of affordable housing (City)						
	Previous Data	Latest Data	DoT	Frequency	Benchmarks	Data Next Available
Number of homeless households with dependent children in temporary accommodation - (Snapshot)	35 (2022/23)	29 (2023/24)	↓ Good	Quarterly	Not available	Q1 2024/25 data available in November 2024
The DoT (Direction of Travel) is calculated on the latest three data points whether they are annual or quarterly. All historic data is available via the Open Data Platform						

56. **Number of homeless households with dependent children in temporary accommodation** – The overall number of households in temporary accommodation has reduced during 2023-24, from 73 in Q1 to 63 at the end of Q4. The number of those with dependent children has fluctuated between 26 and 30 households throughout the year and was 29 households at year-end. Although the council would like these to reduce further, some progress has been made from the peaks seen at the end of 2022-23.
57. Of the 29 households with children in temporary accommodation at quarter end, 27 were recorded as accommodated in hostels and two within Local Authority or Housing Association housing stock. York continues to report no households with children housed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation at quarter end.
58. During 2023-24, an upward trend in overall numbers can be seen both nationally and regionally, however York has been moving in the opposite direction. When looking at the total number of households in temporary accommodation per households in area (000s), York continues to perform positively compared to benchmarks (0.71 in York compared to 4.9 Nationally, 1.4 Regionally and 17.8 in London). It should be noted that these figures are snapshot figures and therefore may fluctuate between the snapshot dates.

Sustainability: Cutting carbon, enhancing the environment for our future (City)						
	Previous Data	Latest Data	DoT	Frequency	Benchmarks	Data Next Available
% of Talkabout panel satisfied with their local area as a place to live	79.68% (Q3 2023/24)	81.00% (Q1 2024/25)	→	Bi-annual	Community Life Survey 2021/22 76%	Q3 2024/25 data available in January 2025
% of Talkabout panel who give unpaid help to any group, club or organisation	60.17% (Q3 2023/24)	64.42% (Q1 2024/25)	↑ Good	Bi-annual	Community Life Survey 2021/22 55%	Q3 2024/25 data available in January 2025
The DoT (Direction of Travel) is calculated on the latest three data points whether they are annual or quarterly. All historic data is available via the Open Data Platform						

59. **% of Talkabout panel satisfied with their local area as a place to live** - The first biannual resident satisfaction survey taken by the Talkabout panel took place during Q1 2024-25. Results from the Q1 2024-25 Talkabout survey showed that 85% of the panel were satisfied with York as a place to live, up 5% from the previous survey. 81% were satisfied with their local area, consistent with results from Q3 2023-24. A slight decline in satisfaction with the local area can be seen over recent years but York continues to perform well against the latest national figure of 76% (Community Life Survey 2021-22). Data for Q3 2024-25 will be available in January 2025.
60. **% of Talkabout panel who give unpaid help to any group, club or organisation** - Results from the Q1 2024-25 Talkabout survey found that 64% of panellists had given unpaid help to any group, club or organisation within the last 12 months. This is a slight increase from Q3 2023-24 (60%), and higher than the latest national figure of 55% taken from the government's Community Life Survey 2021-22. Data for Q3 2024-25 will be available in January 2025.

## Consultation

61. Not applicable.

## Options

62. Not applicable.

## Analysis

63. Not applicable.

## Council Plan

64. Not applicable.

## Implications

65. The recommendations in the report potentially have implications across several areas. However, at this stage
- **Financial implications** are contained throughout the main body of the report. The actions and recommendations contained in this report should ensure the continued financial stability and resilience of the Council both in the current year and in future years.
  - **Human Resources (HR)**, there are no direct implications related to the recommendations.
  - **Legal** The Council is under a statutory obligation to set a balanced budget on an annual basis. Under the Local Government Act 2003 it is required to monitor its budget during the financial year and take remedial action to address overspending and/or shortfalls of income.
  - **Procurement**, there are no specific procurement implications to this report.
  - **Health and Wellbeing**, there are no direct implications related to the recommendations.
  - **Environment and Climate action**, there are no direct implications related to the recommendations.
  - **Affordability**, there are no direct implications related to the recommendations.
  - **Equalities and Human Rights**, there are no direct implications related to the recommendations.
  - **Data Protection and Privacy**, there are no implications related to the recommendations.
  - **Communications**, there are no direct implications related to the recommendations.
  - **Economy**, there are no direct implications related to the recommendations.

## Risk Management

66. An assessment of risks is completed as part of the annual budget setting exercise. These risks are managed effectively through regular reporting and corrective action being taken where necessary and appropriate.

67. The current financial position represents a significant risk to the Council's financial viability and therefore to ongoing service delivery. It is important to ensure that the mitigations and decisions outlined in this paper are delivered and that the overspend is reduced.

**Recommendations**

68. The Committee is asked to:
  - i. Note the finance and performance information.
  - ii. Note that work will continue on identifying the savings needed to fully mitigate the forecast overspend.

Reason: to ensure expenditure is kept within the approved budget.

**Contact Details**

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**Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**

**Ian Floyd**  
**Chief Operating Officer**

**Report  
Approved**

**Date** 22 November 2024

Ian Floyd  
Chief Operating Officer

**Report  
Approved**

**Date** 22 November 2024

**Wards Affected:** *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

**All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:** None.

**Annexes:**

Annex A: CCC Q2 24-25 Scrutiny Committee Scorecard

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# Scrutiny - Children, Culture and Communities 2024/2025

No of Indicators = 54 | Direction of Travel (DoT) shows the trend of how an indicator is performing against its Polarity over time.  
Produced by the Business Intelligence Hub November 2024

## ANNEX A

		Collection Frequency	Previous Years			2024/2025				Target	Polarity	DOT
			2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4			
117c	% of Year 12-13 (academic age 16-17) young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) - (Snapshot)	Monthly	1.10%	0.80%	1.40%	1.40%	1.20%	-	-	-	Up is Bad	◀▶ Neutral
	Benchmark - National Data	Quarterly	2.70%	3.00%	3.40%	3.50%	Due 7th Nov 2024	-	-	-		
	Benchmark - Regional Data	Quarterly	3.10%	3.50%	4.00%	4.30%	Due 7th Nov 2024	-	-	-		
	Benchmark - Comparator Data	Quarterly	2.40%	2.90%	3.50%	3.50%	Due 7th Nov 2024	-	-	-		
148	% of care leavers aged 19-21 in employment, education or training at last birthday (DFE measure) - (Snapshot)	Monthly	60.76%	69.44%	60.81%	63.01%	65.75%	-	-	75%	Up is Good	◀▶ Neutral
	Benchmark - National Data	Annual	55.00%	56.00%	(Avail Dec 2024)	-	-	-	(Avail Dec 2025)	-		
	Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	54.00%	54.00%	(Avail Dec 2024)	-	-	-	(Avail Dec 2025)	-		
	Benchmark - Comparator Data	Annual	54.20%	56.50%	(Avail Dec 2024)	-	-	-	(Avail Dec 2025)	-		
81	%pt gap between FSM and non-FSM pupils at 15, who attain a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19 - (Snapshot)	Annual	24.04%	33.78%	(Avail Apr 2025)	-	-	-	(Avail Apr 2026)	-	Up is Bad	◀▶ Neutral
	Benchmark - National Data	Annual	24.93%	25.22%	(Avail Apr 2025)	-	-	-	(Avail Apr 2026)	-		
	Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	24.88%	25.27%	(Avail Apr 2025)	-	-	-	(Avail Apr 2026)	-		
	Regional Rank (Rank out of 15)	Annual	9	15	(Avail Apr 2025)	-	-	-	(Avail Apr 2026)	-		
82	%pt gap between FSM and non-FSM pupils at 15, who attain a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19 - (Snapshot)	Annual	19.05%	23.60%	(Avail Apr 2025)	-	-	-	(Avail Apr 2026)	-	Up is Bad	◀▶ Neutral
	Benchmark - National Data	Annual	21.39%	20.65%	(Avail Apr 2025)	-	-	-	(Avail Apr 2026)	-		
	Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	24.07%	23.13%	(Avail Apr 2025)	-	-	-	(Avail Apr 2026)	-		
	Regional Rank (Rank out of 15)	Annual	3	9	(Avail Apr 2025)	-	-	-	(Avail Apr 2026)	-		
CJGE17	% of working age population qualified - No qualifications (New methodology from 2022/23)	Annual	3.70%	3.00%	4.90%	-	-	-	-	-	Up is Bad	▲ Red
CJGE18	% of working age population qualified - to at least L2 and above (New methodology from 2022/23)	Annual	87.90%	94.20%	90.00%	-	-	-	-	-	Up is Good	◀▶ Neutral
	Benchmark - National Data	Annual	78.20%	85.80%	86.50%	-	-	-	-	-		
	Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	76.40%	84.50%	85.10%	-	-	-	-	-		
	Regional Rank (Rank out of 15)	Annual	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-		
CJGE20	% of working age population qualified - to at least L4 and above (New methodology from 2022/23)	Annual	59.30%	60.30%	53.80%	-	-	-	-	-	Up is Good	◀▶ Neutral
	Benchmark - National Data	Annual	43.50%	45.70%	47.30%	-	-	-	-	-		
	Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	38.00%	38.90%	41.20%	-	-	-	-	-		
	Regional Rank (Rank out of 15)	Annual	1	3	4	-	-	-	-	-		
EH7	% of children who have achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD) at Foundation Stage - (Snapshot)	Annual	70.90%	69.70%	-	-	-	-	-	-	Up is Good	◀▶ Neutral
	Benchmark - National Data	Annual	65.20%	67.20%	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	64.40%	66.20%	-	-	-	-	-	-		
ES8	% of After School Clubs achieving 'Outstanding', 'Good' or 'Met' - (Snapshot)	Annual	100.00%	100.00%	-	-	-	-	-	-	Up is Good	◀▶ Neutral
ES9	% Take up of early education places by eligible two year olds - (Snapshot)	Annual	93.10%	91.50%	91.00%	-	-	-	-	-	Up is Good	◀▶ Neutral

			Previous Years			2024/2025						
		Collection Frequency	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Target	Polarity	DOT
KS4a	Average Progress 8 score from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4	Annual	0.26	0.12	-	-	-	-	-	-	Up is Good	▼ Red
	Benchmark - National Data	Annual	-0.02	-0.03	-	-	-	-	-	-		
KS4c	% of pupils achieving 9-4 or above in English & Maths at Key Stage 4 (C or above before 2016/17)	Annual	75.30%	70.20%	-	-	-	-	-	-	Up is Good	◀▶ Neutral
	Benchmark - National Data	Annual	56.10%	65.30%	-	-	-	-	-	-		
KS4i	%pt gap between disadvantaged pupils (eligible for FSM in the last 6 years, children in care and adopted from care) and their peers achieving 9-4 in English & Maths at Key Stage 4	Annual	32.00%	43.60%	-	-	-	-	-	-	Up is Bad	▲ Red
	Benchmark - National Data	Annual	28.20%	43.30%	-	-	-	-	-	-		
NEET02c	% of Year 12-13 (academic age 16-17) NEET who possess less than a L2 qualification (New definition from Jan 2017) - (Snapshot)	Monthly	85.40%	87.10%	88.20%	88.50%	100.00%	-	-	-	Up is Bad	◀▶ Neutral
PriFSM	% of children who are eligible for a free school meal in the primary sector (excluding Danesgate)	Annual	15.47%	15.88%	16.99%	-	-	-	-	-	Neutral	◀▶ Neutral
	Benchmark - National Data	Annual	23.70%	23.99%	24.29%	-	-	-	-	-		
	Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	24.50%	25.86%	26.11%	-	-	-	-	-		
	% of children taking a free school meal in the primary sector (excluding Danesgate) - (Jan Census Snapshot)	Annual	12.30%	12.72%	14.19%	-	-	-	-	-	Neutral	◀▶ Neutral
SecFSM	% of children who are eligible for a free school meal in the secondary sector (excluding Danesgate)	Annual	12.60%	14.26%	15.15%	-	-	-	-	-	Neutral	◀▶ Neutral
	Benchmark - National Data	Annual	20.90%	25.39%	24.12%	-	-	-	-	-		
	Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	23.70%	22.69%	26.92%	-	-	-	-	-		
	% of children taking a free school meal in the secondary sector (excluding Danesgate) - (Jan Census Snapshot)	Annual	8.70%	10.20%	11.38%	-	-	-	-	-	Neutral	◀▶ Neutral
SEN05Gi	Total number of active EHCPs overseen by SEND Services - (Snapshot)	Monthly	-	-	1,400	1,436	-	-	-	-	Neutral	◀▶ Neutral
	Number of active EHCPs overseen by SEND Services - where subjects are aged 0-4 - (Snapshot)	Monthly	-	-	37	27	-	-	-	-	Neutral	◀▶ Neutral
	Number of active EHCPs overseen by SEND Services - where subjects are aged 5-11 - (Snapshot)	Monthly	-	-	528	531	-	-	-	-	Neutral	◀▶ Neutral
	Number of active EHCPs overseen by SEND Services - where subjects are aged 12-16 - (Snapshot)	Monthly	-	-	514	551	-	-	-	-	Neutral	◀▶ Neutral
	Number of active EHCPs overseen by SEND Services - where subjects are aged 16+ - (Snapshot)	Monthly	-	-	321	327	-	-	-	-	Neutral	◀▶ Neutral
64	% of children ceasing to be subject to a Child Protection Plan who had been the subject of a CPP continuously for two years or longer - (YTD)	Monthly	2.78%	0.46%	3.42%	4.26%	2.47%	-	-	-	Up is Bad	◀▶ Neutral
	Benchmark - National Data	Annual	3.70%	3.90%	3.80%	-	-	-	(Avail Nov 2025)	-		
	Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	3.80%	3.80%	3.50%	-	-	-	(Avail Nov 2025)	-		
	Benchmark - Comparator Data	Annual	4.30%	3.80%	4.60%	-	-	-	(Avail Nov 2025)	-		
65	% of children becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time - (YTD)	Monthly	29.11%	37.06%	28.57%	45.83%	41.46%	-	-	23%	Up is Bad	▲ Red
	Benchmark - National Data	Annual	23.30%	23.60%	24.70%	-	-	-	(Avail Nov 2025)	-		
	Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	28.00%	23.30%	24.00%	-	-	-	(Avail Nov 2025)	-		

			Previous Years			2024/2025								
		Collection Frequency	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Target	Polarity	DOT		
02. Childrens Social Care		Benchmark - Comparator Data	Annual	22.00%	24.10%	21.70%	-	-	-	(Avail Nov 2025)	-			
	DOD08	Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI)	Five Years	0.13 (2010)	0.12 (2015)	0.1 (2019)	-	-	-	-	-	Up is Bad	▼ Green	
		National Rank (1 is Bad) (Rank out of 317)	Five Years	211 (2010)	238 (2015)	253 (2019)	-	-	-	-	-			
		Children in care per 10k, excluding Short Breaks - (Snapshot)	Monthly	74.59	74.86	69.43	69.43	66.29	-	-	60-70	Neutral	◄► Neutral	
	EFL1	Benchmark - National Data	Annual	70	71	(Avail Dec 2024)	-	-	-	(Avail Dec 2025)	-			
		Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	81	81	(Avail Dec 2024)	-	-	-	(Avail Dec 2025)	-			
		Benchmark - Comparator Data	Annual	63.6	67.2	(Avail Dec 2024)	-	-	-	(Avail Dec 2025)	-			
		Number of children in care, excluding Short Breaks - (Snapshot)	Monthly	276	262	243	243	232	-	-	222-260	Neutral	◄► Neutral	
	EFL2	Children subject to a Child Protection Plan per 10k - (Snapshot)	Monthly	34.05	30	40.57	40.29	39.71	-	-	38-43	Neutral	◄► Neutral	
		Benchmark - National Data	Annual	42.1	43.2	41.6	-	-	-	(Avail Nov 2025)	-			
		Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	48.5	50.8	48.6	-	-	-	(Avail Nov 2025)	-			
		Benchmark - Comparator Data	Annual	39.3	38.3	36.6	-	-	-	(Avail Nov 2025)	-			
	HOU102	Number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan - (Snapshot)	Monthly	126	105	142	141	139	-	-	133-150	Neutral	◄► Neutral	
		Number of homeless households with dependent children in temporary accommodation - (Snapshot)	Quarterly	28	35	29	-	-	-	-	-	Up is Bad	▼ Green	
	MIPack1	Number of children in temporary accommodation - (Snapshot)	Quarterly	51	63	45	-	-	-	-	-	Up is Bad	▼ Green	
		Number of Referrals to Children's Social Care - (YTD)	Monthly	1,588	1,700	1,574	399	797	-	-	1480-1700	Neutral	◄► Neutral	
	03. Public Protection	CSP01	All Crime	Monthly	14,235	14,759	14,208	3,759	3,725	-	-	-	Up is Bad	◄► Neutral
		CSP13	NYP Recorded ASB Calls for Service	Monthly	6,394	4,741	4,644	1,197	1,308	-	-	-	Up is Bad	◄► Neutral
CSP15		Overall Violence (Violence Against Person Def.)	Monthly	5,675	5,746	5,226	1,252	1,279	-	-	-	Up is Bad	▼ Green	
		IQUANTA Family Grouping (1 is good) (Rank out of 15)	Monthly	10	7	5	2	4	-	-	-			
CSP23		Hate Crimes as Recorded by NYP	Monthly	233	168	199	55	79	-	-	-	Up is Bad	▲ Red	
		IQUANTA Family Grouping (1 is good) (Rank out of 15)	Monthly	15	12	8	5	7	-	-	-			
CSP28		Number of Incidents of ASB within the city centre ARZ	Monthly	1,276	994	1,149	336	435	-	-	-	Up is Bad	▲ Red	
CSP29a		Number of Incidents of ASB within the CIZ	Monthly	656	423	625	181	221	-	-	-	Up is Bad	▲ Red	
CYPL2c		Number of Early Help Assessments initiated	Monthly	517	333	331	93	57	-	-	-	Neutral	◄► Neutral	
PP08		% of births registered within 42 days	Monthly	87.00%	93.00%	98.00%	95.00%	-	-	-	-	Up is Good	◄► Neutral	
		Benchmark - National Data	Monthly	74.00%	88.00%	92.00%	91.00%	-	-	-	-			
		Benchmark - Regional Data	Monthly	65.00%	91.00%	93.00%	92.00%	-	-	-	-			
PP09	% of still births registered within 42 days	Monthly	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	-	-	-	-	Up is Good	◄► Neutral		
	Benchmark - National Data	Monthly	97.00%	97.00%	98.00%	97.00%	-	-	-	-				
	Benchmark - Regional Data	Monthly	97.00%	97.00%	97.00%	95.00%	-	-	-	-				

			Previous Years			2024/2025						
		Collection Frequency	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Target	Polarity	DOT
PP10	% of deaths registered within 5 days	Monthly	72.00%	47.00%	47.00%	35.00%	-	-	-	-	Up is Good	◀▶ Neutral
	Benchmark - National Data	Monthly	60.00%	47.00%	48.00%	42.00%	-	-	-	-		
	Benchmark - Regional Data	Monthly	59.00%	48.00%	50.00%	38.00%	-	-	-	-		
CHP30	Hospital admissions for asthma (0-18 years), per 100,000 population	Annual	80.2	106.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	Up is Bad	▲ Red
	Benchmark - National Data	Annual	131.5	122.2	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	130.7	112.9	-	-	-	-	-	-		
NCMP01	% of reception year children recorded as being obese (single year)	Annual	8.90%	7.80%	-	-	-	-	-	-	Up is Bad	◀▶ Neutral
	Benchmark - National Data	Annual	10.11%	9.15%	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	10.96%	9.90%	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	Regional Rank (Rank out of 15)	Annual	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-		
NCMP02	% of children in Year 6 recorded as being obese (single year)	Annual	18.87%	18.70%	-	-	-	-	-	-	Up is Bad	◀▶ Neutral
	Benchmark - National Data	Annual	23.45%	22.65%	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	24.89%	24.10%	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	Regional Rank (Rank out of 15)	Annual	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-		
NCMP03	% of reception year children recorded as being overweight (incl. obese) (single year)	Annual	22.70%	19.90%	-	-	-	-	-	-	Up is Bad	◀▶ Neutral
	Benchmark - National Data	Annual	22.25%	21.31%	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	23.73%	22.50%	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	Regional Rank (Rank out of 15)	Annual	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-		
PHOF01a	% of adults (aged 19+) that meet CMO recommendations for physical activity (150+ moderate intensity equivalent minutes per week)	Annual	75.20%	73.60%	-	-	-	-	-	-	Up is Good	◀▶ Neutral
	Benchmark - National Data	Annual	67.30%	67.10%	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	Benchmark - Regional Data	Annual	66.10%	65.70%	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	Regional Rank (Rank out of 15)	Annual	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-		
PHOF06a	Under 18 conceptions (per 1,000 females aged 15-17) (Rolling 12 Months)	Quarterly	12.2	Due April 25	-	-	-	-	-	-	Up is Bad	▲ Red
	Benchmark - National Data	Quarterly	13.7	Due April 25	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	Benchmark - Regional Data	Quarterly	17.7	Due April 25	-	-	-	-	-	-		
PHYS06	% of adults (aged 16+) that are physically active (150+ moderate intensity equivalent minutes per week, excl. gardening)	Annual	66.50%	70.40%	69.80%	-	-	-	-	-	Up is Good	◀▶ Neutral
	Benchmark - National Data	Annual	61.40%	63.10%	63.40%	-	-	-	-	-		
05_Tourism	LIB01	Library Visits - All Libraries	Monthly	617,771	864,963	-	-	-	-	-	Up is Good	▲ Green
	LIB02	Books Borrowed - All Libraries	Monthly	942,896	1,057,839	-	-	-	-	-	Up is Good	▲ Green
	TOU01	Hotels: Room Occupancy (%)	Monthly	65.13%	80.10%	83.71%	84.00%	-	-	-	Up is Good	◀▶ Neutral
	TOU04	Hotels: Average Room Rate (£)	Monthly	£100.11	£100.28	£105.92	£108.01	-	-	-	Neutral	◀▶ Neutral
	TOU08	Visits to Attractions: Big Attractions (Within City of York) - (New definition from 2022/23)	Monthly	1,830,597	2,692,054	2,779,480	689,338	-	-	-	Up is Good	◀▶ Neutral
	TOU09	Visits to Attractions: Small Attractions (Within City of York) - (New definition from 2022/23)	Monthly	136,032	189,889	219,473	55,490	-	-	-	Up is Good	◀▶ Neutral
	TOU14	Parliament Street Footfall	Monthly	6,955,548	6,869,593	7,329,462	1,765,712	2,237,888	-	-	Up is Good	▲ Green

			Previous Years			2024/2025							
		Collection Frequency	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Target	Polarity	DOT	
06. Resident Surveys	TAP01	% of Talkabout panel satisfied with their local area as a place to live	Quarterly	84.38%	82.18%	79.68%	81.00%	-	-	-	-	Up is Good	◀▶ Neutral
		Benchmark - Community Life Survey	Annual	76.00%	N/C	74.00%	-	-	-	-	-		
		Benchmark - LG Inform	Quarterly	80.00%	79.00%	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	TAP11	% of Talkabout panel who agree that they can influence decisions in their local area	Quarterly	24.26%	20.94%	21.37%	22.11%	-	-	-	-	Up is Good	▲ Green
		Benchmark - Community Life Survey	Annual	27.00%	N/C	23.00%	-	-	-	-	-		
	TAP13	% of Talkabout panel who give unpaid help to any group, club or organisation	Quarterly	61.35%	60.64%	60.17%	64.42%	-	-	-	-	Up is Good	▲ Green
		Benchmark - Community Life Survey	Annual	55.00%	N/C	54.00%	-	-	-	-	-		
	TAP37	% of the panel reporting an 'excellent' experience when they last contacted the council about a service	Quarterly	-	-	10.92%	11.07%	-	-	-	-	Up is Good	◀▶ Neutral
		% of the panel reporting a 'good' experience when they last contacted the council about a service	Quarterly	-	-	34.86%	29.07%	-	-	-	-	Up is Good	◀▶ Neutral
		% of the panel reporting a 'satisfactory' experience when they last contacted the council about a service	Quarterly	-	-	34.51%	37.02%	-	-	-	-	Up is Good	◀▶ Neutral
% of the panel reporting a 'poor' experience when they last contacted the council about a service		Quarterly	-	-	19.72%	22.84%	-	-	-	-	Up is Bad	◀▶ Neutral	
07. Large Projects	CORP10L	Large Project - Provision of School Places	Discontinued	Amber	Amber	Complete	-	-	-	-	Neutral	◀▶ Neutral	
		Large Project - Family Hubs Implementation Project	Quarterly	-	Green	Green	Green	Green	-	-	Neutral	◀▶ Neutral	
		Large Project - CRM Replacement	Quarterly	-	-	-	-	Amber	-	-	Neutral	◀▶ Neutral	
08. Finance	BP1110	Forecast Budget Outturn (£000s Overspent / - Underspent) - CYC Subtotal (excluding contingency)	Quarterly	£2,638	£4,887	£3,661	£3,896	£4,445	-	-	Up is Bad	◀▶ Neutral	

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**Children, Culture and Communities Scrutiny Committee    3 December 2024**

## **Report of the Director of Housing and Communities**

### **Annual Update – Libraries and Archives**

#### **Summary**

1. This report provides members with an annual update from Explore Libraries and Archives Mutual Limited (Explore) who operate the Council's libraries and archives service.

#### **Background**

2. Libraries and Archives: Explore Libraries and Archives Mutual Limited (Explore) is an independent Industrial and Provident Mutual organisation which entered a service delivery contract with the Council for 15 years on 1 April 2019 and currently operate:
  - York Explore: the city centre flagship facility where all services are available including the Archive & Local History Centre
  - Explore Library Learning Centres: Acomb Library, Clifton Library and The Centre@Burnholme in Tang Hall
  - Explore Gateways: Smaller community libraries are located at; Bishopthorpe, Copmanthorpe, Dringhouses, Dunnington, Fulford, Haxby & Wigginton, Huntington, New Earswick, Poppleton, Strensall and York Community Stadium
  - Virtual Libraries: E-library services including E-books, E-magazines & newspapers and online reference library
  - Reading Cafes: Homestead Park, Hungate and Rowntree Park
  - Mobile Library: One mobile vehicle covering the smaller settlements around the edges of York on a two-week timetable.

## **Performance Management Arrangements**

3. As part of the contractual arrangements for Explore there is a performance management framework that requires them to report formally to the Council quarterly against a set framework. The framework is split into areas, with each having a service specification with performance measures around availability of services, required outcomes and where required, specific measurements.
4. The performance and monitoring framework also acts to financially penalise poor performance or non-compliance, as well as rewarding over achievements.
5. An annual report from Explore is also a requirement of the contract which is being presented at Annex A to describe the activities against the service specification.
6. In 2023-24 Explore's performance was monitored at each quarter and then finally at the end of the contract year. No financial deductions have been made due to non-compliance or performance issues. Consultation

## **Options**

7. There are no options available for scrutiny members to consider for this report.

## **Council Plan**

8. Explore's annual report for 2023/24 at annex A clearly shows that Explore contributed to a significant number of corporate and 'One City, for all' Council Plan 2023-2027 priorities. Explore's annual service delivery plan aligns to the four core commitments, as can be seen in Explore's detail report, their work can contribute directly to equalities, affordability, climate and health and wellbeing, as well as education, skills and the economy.
9. **Implications:**
  - Financial - There are no financial implications.
  - Human Resources (HR) - There are no HR implications.
  - Equalities - There are no equalities implications.
  - Legal - There are no legal implications.



- Crime and Disorder - There are no crime and disorder implications.
- Information Technology (IT) - There are no IT implications.
- Property - There are no property implications.

### **Risk Management**

10. There are no know risks associated to this update report looking back at the performance of 2023-24.

### **Recommendations**

11. To note and comment upon the activities of the Explore update report.

Reason: To support the council's role in performance management of the library and archives service contract.

## Contact Details

### Author:

**Jenny Layfield**

Chief Executive, Explore  
York Libraries and Archives  
Mutual Limited

### Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

**Andrew Laslett**

Strategic Services Manager  
Customer and Communities  
Tel no. 01904 553370

**Report  
Approved**



**Date** 22 November 2024

### Specialist Implications Officer(s)

N/A

**Wards Affected:** *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

**All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

### Background Papers:

[Children, Culture & Communities Scrutiny Committee – 17 Oct 2023.](#)

Explore's annual report for 2022-23.

[Children, Culture & Communities Scrutiny Committee – 21 July 2022.](#)

Explore's annual report for 2021-22.

[Executive meeting 21 June 2018.](#)

Item 7. The Library and Archives Service: Procurement of Operator Report

### Annexes

*Annex A: Explore York Libraries & Archives Report 2023-24*

## **Explore York Libraries and Archives**

### **Report against contract April 2023- March 2024**

Explore is a different kind of public service: a mutual owned by our staff and our community members. We are dedicated to enhancing lives in York in our trusted spaces; providing library, archive, learning, and creative activities; reflecting and developing a lively, inclusive community. We offer opportunities for people to read, meet, learn, imagine, create and belong.

Explore receives almost two thirds of its income through its contract with City of York Council and the remainder we need to raise through trading, grants and other fundraising, last year our income totalled £4.02m. The cost of running Explore in 2023-24 was £4.01m

This report is structured round the core offers as detailed in the contract specification with City of York Council and is based on delivery in the 2023-24 financial year.

### **Overview of Year In Numbers**

- 821,837 Physical library visits
- 1,081,491 physical and e-library issues
- 45,657 PC sessions
- 3,134 public events attended by 46,90 people
- 97,847 self and staff mediated engagement with the Archives
- 436, 712 website visits
- 596, 050 impressions on social media and 12,351 engagements
- 20,943 volunteer hours donated

The numbers of above demonstrate how much Explore York Libraries and Archives is built into the fabric of the communities it supports. Our overall trend is one of growth on the previous year and that despite continued financial pressures and increased costs which impact on our ability to do more of the things we know our customers love.

This was Explore's first year as an Arts Council National Portfolio organisation and it has been great to see the activity, mainly focussed on Tang Hall, that we have been able to do because of this funding.

This year our Archives team have focussed on building the framework to launch our Setting the Record Straight project. The project implements a comprehensive review of our collection's information, provides further preventative conservation measures on selected items; creates generous online information about our collections,

providing contextual details and will support and signpost researchers to related material.

## Reading

Explore champions the values of libraries to support reading and offer inspiring reading choices.

The Summer Reading Challenge is our key programme for children and families, the theme for the Summer Reading Challenge 2023 was Ready, Set, Read! Delivered in partnership with Youth Sport Trust, Ready, Set, Read! To encourage children to participate in the Summer Reading Challenge over the summer holidays we delivered over 100 events and activities for children and their families across our libraries, including Hungate Reading Café and the Community Stadium.

The below statistics demonstrate the scale of this programme but also the success in relation to encouraging children to continue to read over the summer holidays.

- 3142 children signed up Ready, Set, Read! (2998 in 2022)
- 1709 (55%) completed the Challenge (1617 in 2022)
- 301 children joined the library so they could take part in the Challenge.
- 70,409 physical books and 3516 e-books/e-audio were issued to children over the period of the Challenge.
- 57 Summer Reading Challenge Volunteers volunteered a total of 475 hours.

Explore funds most of the Summer Reading Challenge activities through external grants and partnerships.

In addition to the SRC Explore continues to support the development of young people and children through a multitude of other activities including the Bloodaxe Reading Challenge which saw an increase increase in both starters and completers this year, with 348 starting and 204 completing the challenge. With 114 children and their parents attended the celebratory event with author Louie Stowell.

We believe in working in partnership with others in the City to ensure that our families have access to the broadest range of information, advice and guidance as policy. By way of example our Look Say Sing Play (LSSP) sessions at Acomb, York and Tang Hall Explore Centres are supported by a CYC Childcare Worker who has been invaluable ensuring the wider message around CYC Early Years values and service is communicated to as many people as possible.

For our adult readers we provide "Finding the Words" a monthly on-line poetry performance, which continues to be popular, especially with those who find difficulty in accessing an in-person event. We host events as part of York Literature Festival

and support 75 different reading groups. Reading groups are an increasingly important way for adults to connect and share their joy of reading with 11 new groups starting this year.

### **Information**

Our skilled information professional staff support customers to access trusted information every day.

Three major new initiatives were launched during the year cementing our role as trusted, safe, welcoming spaces within communities.

1. The Government-backed family hub delivery model in libraries went live as a pilot initiative on 6<sup>th</sup> November, with Explore Centres supporting enquiries from within the community with expert support provided once a week by a trained specialist Family Navigator from within City of York Council. The family navigator sessions and all scheduled at peak visitor times and mapped to storytime activity. The pilot ends in April, where the success of the impact on the family hub model and its delivery through libraries will be assessed and decision made with regards its sustainability.
2. Following a successful programme of staff training, the Explore Centres at Acomb, Tang Hall and York are now registered as Hate Crime Reporting Centres and are advertised as such on various websites. Anyone suffering a hate crime can walk in and report the crime, with support from staff.
3. The mobile library was utilised in partnership with York CAB and City of York Council to provide targeted support to communities at street level within Tang Hall to help people access benefits and other financial support. The service operates once a fortnight.

Throughout the year we continued to support council initiatives, providing the community with access and support in accessing key City-wide consultations, including the high profile and wide-ranging City of York Council Local Transport Strategy Consultation. Our support in helping communities access key information online continues, with all libraries providing one to one digital support to access fuel payments etc, including supporting 28 customers access the Household Support fund

### **Digital**

We continue to help people to access services on-line such as completing forms and printing documents. We deliver regular weekly digital support sessions at Explore Centres. We focused activity during Get On-line Week in October and Safer Internet

Day in February. In addition, our public PCs were booked out for 45,657 sessions during the year, an increase of 3791 sessions on the previous year.

### **Health and Social Care**

We continue to run our very popular weekly Adults' events that support community connection, reducing social isolation and improving wellbeing including knit and natter, Boccia, scrabble, chess and adult Lego sessions.

In addition our additional Art Council funding as enabled us to deliver:

"Creative Café" sessions at Tang Hall Explore. These involve artists who are experienced in participatory, co-creation working with a group of Tang Hall residents who come together over 8 sessions to create artwork telling the story of the history of Tang Hall inspired by and using images from the Archives. The final work was celebrated at an exhibition in March.

"Archive through the lens of Disability Arts" - disabled artist Stephen Lee Hodgkins, and representatives from York People First shared their archive research including an easy read document at a public event attended by disabled artists, researchers, disability groups, Explore staff and members of the public. The event was held for York Disability Week 2023 and had 30 plus attendees.

To support *Children's Mental Health Awareness Week* in February we hosted Creativity Starts Here, a confidence building art class for Teens at Tang Hall Explore. Providing an opportunity to express their feelings through their art.

### **Learning & Skills**

We host York Learning in our Explore Centres and signpost to formal learning as a progression routes. Explore contributes to the citywide Community Learning Partnership. Our programme of events support life-long and inter-generational learning. Through our work with partner organisations we showcase opportunities. Examples include *Multiply* focused on adults with no maths qualification; *Make a Difference* providing adult careers advice.

Our programme of exhibitions which are also delivered as part of our NPO activity plan include thought-provoking content as illustrated by the following examples curated in partnership with Festival of Ideas in June with the theme Rediscover, Reimagine, Rebuild.

*Hidden Treasures: an exhibition by Navigators Art & Performance at York Explore*  
Curated by Navigators Arts & Performance for York Festival of Ideas 2023

This new exhibition was inspired by rarely seen works in York Art Gallery, books in York Explore, intriguing aspects of York life and culture that people might not notice in their day-to-day lives or may not be aware of at all.

*Photography in Yorkshire in the 1990's Exhibition and talk at Hungate Café.*

Historian Theo Gordon in conversation with photographer Sunil Gupta, whose work helps to historicise recent interest in decolonisation and queer representation. Sunil talked about his work in Yorkshire in the 1990s, curating the landmark AIDS activist exhibition 'Ecstatic Antibodies: Resisting the AIDS Mythology' at Impressions Gallery, York, and reflected on his time working at the University of Hull.

## **Culture**

We continue to challenge imaginations through our programme of culture and creativity. As an NPO we will focus on culture and creativity in the heart of our communities.

Year 1 NPO activity at Tang Hall Explore:

*York Dance Space: Brick by Brick Step by Step* a collaboration with Tang Hall Past and Present, local schools, and community groups. This dance and music theatre piece is a celebration of 100 years of Tang Hall social estate telling the stories of people and place. The rich findings from Explore Archive provided the source of inspiration. A final performance is scheduled for April in the main hall at Burnholme.

*History Misbehaves:* An audio drama based on a series of monologues dramatizing how Tang hall history has misbehaved! The drama was co-created with performers from the Tang Hall community, writer Paul Birch and director Kate Valentine (Digital Drama). The audio drama will be shared at a live event at Tang Hall Explore at the Centre at Burnholme in April. The drama will also be featured on local radio and will be available on all pod cast platforms.

School holiday activity programme: We were able to provide a vibrant holiday activity programme for children and families through funding from for example York Children's Trust and our work with parts such as NRM and NDB1. By participating in the HAF (Holiday Activity and Food) programme we were able to include focused activities aimed disadvantages families. Activities ranged from theatre productions, Bollywood dancing workshops to comic book art workshop, circus skills workshop, Stop Frame Animation sessions and Shakespeare spooky stories!

Working in partnership: working with partners added to our programme of activities examples include York Literature Festival, Festival of Ideas, Aesthetica Film Festival and National Centre for Early Music with Baroque around the Books.

**Archive and Local History Provision:**

During 2023/24, the archives team made it a priority to begin addressing the serious legacy issues preventing staff and users from accessing the collections. Key tasks have included:

- Identifying and highlighting the serious legacy issues relating to the management of the archive's collections
- Developing a methodology and associated workflows that will begin to address these issues
- Assessing the impact of the issues on our status as an accredited service
- Opening a dialogue with The National Archives Accreditation Panel
- Identifying ways in which the service can address these problems without jeopardising its standing as an accredited service

Under the guidance of an experienced archives consultant, the team have achieved the following:

- Developed and submitted the Archive Service Status Report to key stakeholders
- Met with The National Archives and secured an extension to our accreditation submission. The new deadline for our submission is November 2025. The panel have also requested an interim update be sent no later than 20 October 2024.
- Developed a Prioritisation Matrix and Remedial Cataloguing workflows to guide and document the work to address legacy issues
- Created staff capacity for this work by closing the Reading Room for 3 days per month from April 2024
- Packaged and communicated this work under the title: [Setting the Record Straight](#)
- Formulated a new suite of KPIs to report on this work to internal and external stakeholders

This year the service took a major step towards improving collections care, with a subscription to The National Conservation Service (NCS). This subscription will provide much needed professional conservation services and advice for the team. The collections have some significant conservation challenges, including the presence of mould (from being stored historically in poor conditions), and undocumented cellulose nitrate and acetate negative film. Supported by the Director of NCS, the archivists have completed a detailed benchmarking exercise, which identifies areas for improvement and will inform forward planning.



We are working closely with CYC to understand the challenges in ensuring timely transfer of records to the Archives. We are both concerned that the level of transfers are currently below what we would expect them to be

The project with CYC to implement Preservica has reached some key milestones, although it should be noted that there remain risks to delivery of the programme. Key achievements are:

- Installation of digital processing PC and associated ingest software
- Creation and testing of ingest procedures with a local community group
- Automation of transfer of Mod Gov minutes, pilot
- Creation of Explore's Digital Preservation Policy and Strategy
- Creation and adoption of new gift agreement covering digital material

In addition Explore Archives continues to demonstrate an exceptional commitment to access and engagement. In November, the archives service recruited a new team member, Archivist (Access, Inclusion and Engagement). This role supports Explore's NPO programme, our outreach work across our communities, and improvements in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for archives users and archives staff.

In addition, the Archives have seen a significant increase in both archive researchers and document retrievals in comparison to 2022/23. This is against a national picture of decline with regards to in-person visits. Explore Archives has worked with a broad variety of location organisation and community groups over the year including Heritage Hunters (in partnership with York Museums Trust), Roman York (in partnership with the York Archaeological Trust), York People First, York Unlocked and many of the local history groups across York.

We have worked with 8 education groups providing 13 different sessions on topics as varied as Buildings History, Fashion, Medieval History, the Wars of the Roses and Crime and Punishment. In addition we have provided placements for students from both York St John and University of York.

## **Looking Ahead**

Explore continues to deliver an exceptional service for the residents of York, 2024-25 includes the second year of delivery under our NPO programme, the opening of the new Clifton Explore Library along with celebrations linked to our 10<sup>th</sup> year as Explore York Libraries and Archives.

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## Children, Culture and Communities Scrutiny Committee 3 December 2024

### Report of the Corporate Director of Children and Education (DCS)

#### Sufficiency Strategy – Children’s Services

##### Summary

1. This report outlines our responsibilities in accordance with Section 22G of Children Act 1989. This is referred to as our **Sufficiency Duties** to ensure we have enough homes for children in the care of the local authority.
2. The accompanying **Sufficiency Strategy 2024-2027** sets out our vision and approach to meeting our responsibilities to provide secure, safe and appropriate accommodation to children in need, children in care and care leavers over the next three years.
3. It is informed by current and anticipated sufficiency requirements, market changes, gaps and opportunities, drawing on a wide range of available national, regional and local data, and identifies the key challenges that we face in achieving sufficiency and our approach to overcoming them.
4. Members are asked to consider and support this strategy, as we deliver on the ambitious targets we have set and achieve positive outcomes for children and young people in our care.

##### Background

5. The sufficiency duty describes a local authorities’ responsibility to have enough suitable homes for children looked after. Local authorities can find it difficult to meet their sufficiency duty for many reasons. These can include:
  - the rising numbers of children in care and an older profile of children.

- issues with recruitment and retention of foster carers, residential care workers and other social care and wider children's professionals.
  - not having the right quantity and mix of provision for the children in their area.
  - difficulties in working with the private market, where there is an imbalance of power and local authorities have little choice.
6. These challenges are not new, though some have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. 'The independent review of children's social care' (the Care Review) and our research report 'Children's social care 2022: recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic' highlighted these issues..
7. **Section 22G of the Children's 1989 Act** requires local authorities to take strategic action in respect of those children they look after and where it is appropriate for their welfare, to be provided with accommodation. In those circumstances, section 22G requires local authorities, so far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure that there is **sufficient** accommodation for those children that meets their needs and is within their local authority area.
8. Securing sufficient accommodation that meets the needs of looked after children is essential if we are to deliver improved outcomes for this vulnerable group. Having the right home, in the right place, at the right time, is a vital factor in improving stability, which is a critical in relation to better outcomes for children in our care.
9. The sufficiency duty applies to all children who are defined as 'looked after' under the 1989 Act. However, we also recognise that in improving outcomes for children and having sufficient accommodation to meet their needs – is also taking earlier, preventive action to support children and families so that fewer children become looked after. This is in line with our '**Building Brighter Futures**' practice model.

10. Therefore, the sufficiency duty must be seen as a core part of how we meet our broader duties to ensure that looked after children's needs are fully assessed, that effective matching takes place so that these are met within an appropriate care arrangement, and that regular reviews are held to evaluate whether the child's needs are being met and to address any emerging issues.
11. Within the relevant statutory guidance, there is a requirement to have the plans in place for meeting our sufficiency duties. The accompanying document with this report is the **City of York's Sufficiency Strategy 2024-2027**.

### **Consultation**

12. This is not required/needed for the purpose of this report.

### **Options**

13. Members are invited to consider the report and accompanying **Sufficiency Strategy**. There are no key decisions or options to consider.

### **Analysis**

14. The City of York Council is **required**, under Section 22G Children's Act 1989, to ensure that it has plans in place to meet its sufficiency needs. The attached **Sufficiency Strategy** document satisfies these requirements.

### **Council Plan**

15. The Council Plan 2023-2027, **One City, For All**, sets a strong ambition to increase opportunities for everyone living in York to live healthy and fulfilling lives.
16. This strategy document will develop and strengthen our resources to ensure children and young people, continue to live in homes close to their families, friends, and wider connected networks.
  - **Equalities and Human Rights** – Equality of opportunity
  - **Affordability** - Tackling the cost-of-living crisis

- **Climate** - Environment and the climate emergency
- **Health** - Improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities, taking a Health in All Policies approach.

## Implications

17. This report and accompanying strategy are to provide Members with assurance on the work being done to meet our Sufficiency Duty. There are no known implications.

## Risk Management

18. The City of York Council is required, Section 22G Children Act 1989, to have a **Sufficiency Strategy** in place, which outlines our plans to ensure that there are sufficient resources to meet the needs of children in our care.
19. Not having a strategy in place would mean that we were operating outside of the requirements as defined in the legislation and would compromise our position for future regulatory inspections.

## Recommendations

20. That members consider and note this report and accompanying strategy document.

Reason: So that members are updated on the council's responsibilities in accordance with Section 22G of Children Act 1989.

**Contact Details**

**Author:**  
*Michael Cavan*  
*Head of Resources*

**Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**  
Martin Kelly  
Corporate Director of Children and Education  
Tel no. Ext. +5612

**Report  
Approved**



**Date** 22 November 2024

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)**

N/A

**Wards Affected:** *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

**All**



**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:**

None

**Annexes**

Annex A: Sufficiency Strategy 2024-2027

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# Sufficiency Strategy

## 2024-2027

# Contents

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# Introduction

The Sufficiency Strategy details how City of York Council intends to meet the 'Sufficiency Duty' I set out in Section 22G of the Children Act 1989.

It sets out our vision and approach to meeting our responsibilities to provide secure, safe and appropriate accommodation to children in need, children in care and care leavers over the next three years. It is informed by current and anticipated sufficiency requirements, market changes, gaps and opportunities, drawing on a wide range of available national, regional and local data, and identifies the key challenges that we face in achieving sufficiency and our approach to overcoming them.



The Children and Social Work Act 2017 says that when a child or young person comes into the care of the local authority or is under 25 and was looked after by the authority for at least 13 weeks after their 14th birthday, the authority becomes their corporate parent. As a corporate parent, we should:

- Act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people.
- Encourage them to express their views, wishes and feelings, and take them into account, while promoting high aspirations and trying to secure the best outcomes for them.
- Make sure they have access to services.
- Make sure that they are safe, with stable home lives, relationships and education or work.
- Prepare them for adulthood and independent living.

We are relentless in our ambition to achieve the best outcomes for our children and young people, so they can thrive and reach their full potential. Placing children at the heart of everything we do and listening to their voice, will ensure that they are part of shaping future services and feel heard, valued, and involved.

## This Sufficiency Strategy will enable us to;

- **Prioritise children's needs:** The sufficiency strategy ensures that children's needs are at the forefront of decision-making processes, safeguarding their well-being and providing tailored support where required.
- **Plan for the future:** By anticipating future needs and challenges, we can plan and allocate resources effectively, ensuring that services are sustainable and adaptable.
- **Promote accountability and transparency:** The strategy fosters accountability among agencies and local authorities, promoting transparency in how resources are allocated and used.
- **Enable early intervention:** Early identification of challenges and timely intervention can prevent issues from escalating, benefiting children, families, and the broader community.
- **Encourage collaboration:** The strategy encourages collaboration between various stakeholders, including local authorities, health services, education providers, and community organisations, fostering a holistic approach to children's welfare.
- **Empower children and families:** By providing accessible and high-quality services, we empower children and families to actively participate in decision-making and take ownership of their well-being.

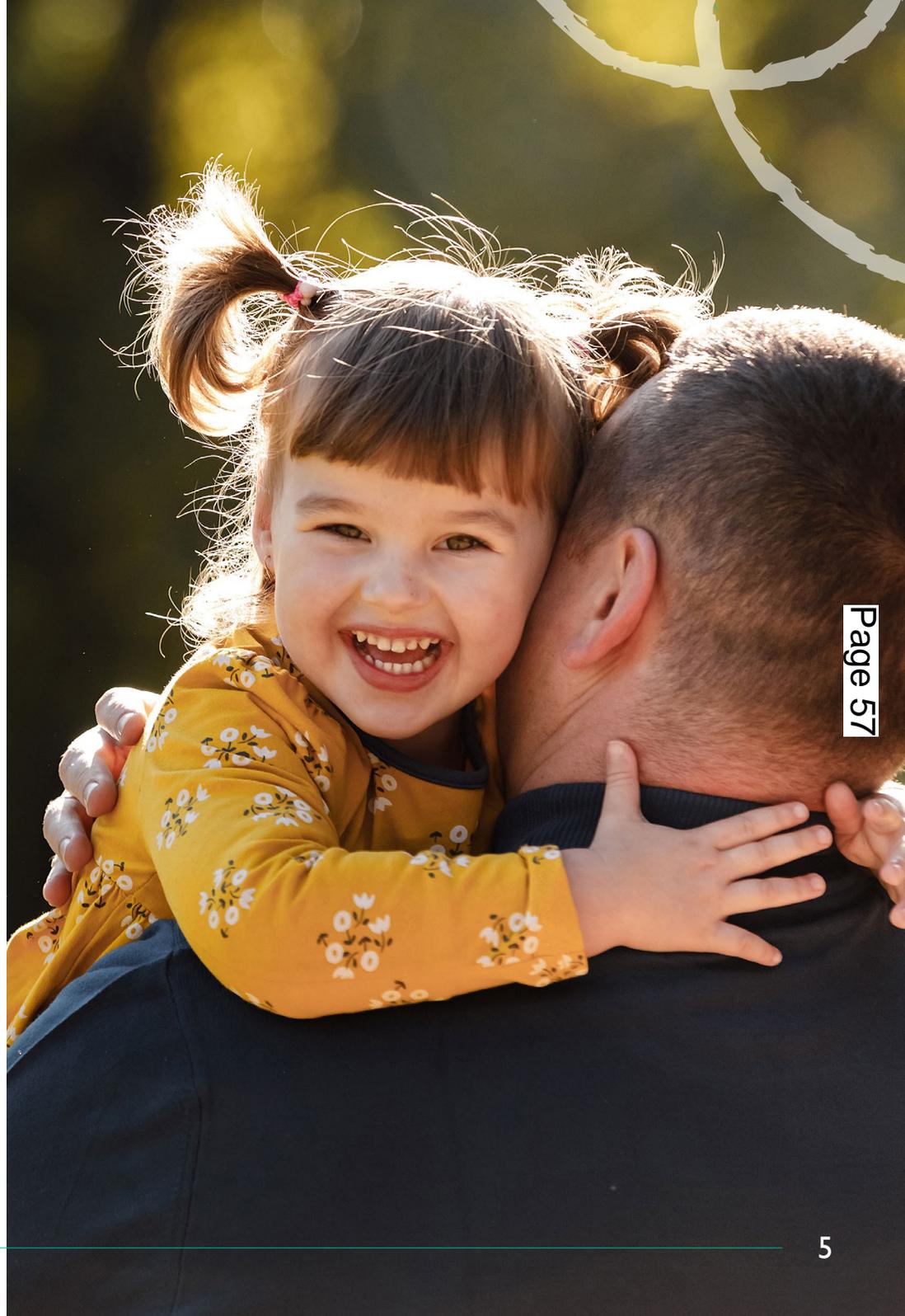


# Our vision

We know that children and young people achieve better long-term outcomes, when families are supported to remain together, building on their own unique strengths and qualities, and drawing on the support from their wider networks.

Our vision is firmly rooted in our *Building Brighter Futures* model in that we are determined to do what is right for all looked after children. Sometimes, this might mean living in alternative care arrangements, depending on their unique circumstances. We are committed to ensuring that these arrangements can provide a safe, caring, and stable home that meets their needs.

However, we also believe that children and young people achieve better long-term outcomes when living within their own family or connected network. Therefore, we constantly challenge ourselves and each other in considering the long-term impact on our decision making, our relentless approach to developing resilient lifelong foundations for children through secure local family networks and always asking the question; *is it good enough for my own child and family?*



# Executive summary

This strategy sets out how the City of York meets our duty to ensure that there are sufficient resources to meet the needs of children, young people, and families where:

- Children are at risk of becoming looked after.
- Children are looked after and,
- Children are leaving care.

This strategy ensures that we fulfil our role as corporate parents. It highlights what we already know about the numbers and needs of children at risk of becoming looked after, the children who are looked after and what we are doing to address the challenges we face.

We are committed to working with children, young people, and families in designing and developing the right support, in the right place and delivered at the right time.



The strategy provides direction on the arrangements we will put in place to provide the right quality and range of services to achieve the following commitments:

- We will strive to safely **reduce** the rising number of children and young people looked after.
- We will **increase** the number of children and young people supported to live safely with their families or connected networks and in their communities.
- We will **reduce** our reliance on services away from children's networks and communities where these are not in the best interest of the child and young person.
- We will **increase** the numbers of kinship and foster carers.
- We will **develop** our local residential services to meet children with more complex needs.
- We will improve the way we **commission** services.
- We will **increase** our accommodation options for young people leaving care.
- We will design and develop accommodation and support for **unaccompanied asylum-seeking children** in York.

The success of the sufficiency strategy will be measured against our three **meaningful measures**:



## Stay home

More children remaining at home or in their naturally connected network and community.



## Come home

More children returning to their family or network where it is safe to do so or at the very least returning to York when this is in line with their wishes.



## Safe and connected

Children are safe and connected to their network, community and supported to learn.

The golden thread that runs through our sufficiency strategy is **working together** with children, young people, families, carers, and partners so that we better understand their needs, make decisions to support long term outcomes and provide the most appropriate care arrangements

## To deliver this sufficiency strategy we will:

- Deliver our new **Together, WE Can model**.  
The 'Together, WE Can' service will provide edge of care outreach support to prevent overall admissions into care. Specific priorities are to:
  - » Register and open Wenlock Terrace and Ousecliffe House
  - » Recruitment of Clinical Psychologist for Together, WE Can service.
  - » Recruitment of a Specialist Speech and Language Therapist.
- Undertake **a full review of the Fostering Service**.  
The aim of this review is to improve efficiency, support, and training and to increase the number of inhouse foster carers in York.
- Work through our Service Level Agreement with Marketing and Communications to deliver a clear **recruitment strategy** for foster carers.
- Improve foster carer retention, which will be aligned to our fostering skills matrix and fee structure and investment in our foster carers **support** and **training**.
- Take forward proposals to purchase properties in York that will enable us to support **unaccompanied asylum-seeking children** successfully.

- Develop and deliver our Supported Accommodation service
- Implement our **Staying Close model** to support care experienced young people successfully move towards independence, utilising a variety of accommodation options.

The delivery of this Sufficiency Strategy will be led by the Head of Resources, who will produce and share quarterly and annual reports to demonstrate progress.





# Our young people

## We understand our local need by:

Gathering insights from:  
commissioners, social workers,  
children and parents

Sharing knowledge:  
across agencies/departments  
(housing, health and police)

Sharing knowledge:  
across local authorities and the region

### National and local

Dataset:  
economic trends that impact the  
sector or local area

### Local

Dataset:  
incoming referrals and placements  
required

### Local

Dataset:  
placement stability

### Local

Dataset:  
benchmarking data

### Local

Dataset:  
length of time children are in care and  
barriers to leaving care

### National and local

Dataset:  
characteristics of wider population

### National and local

Dataset:  
characteristics of children in care and  
children in need

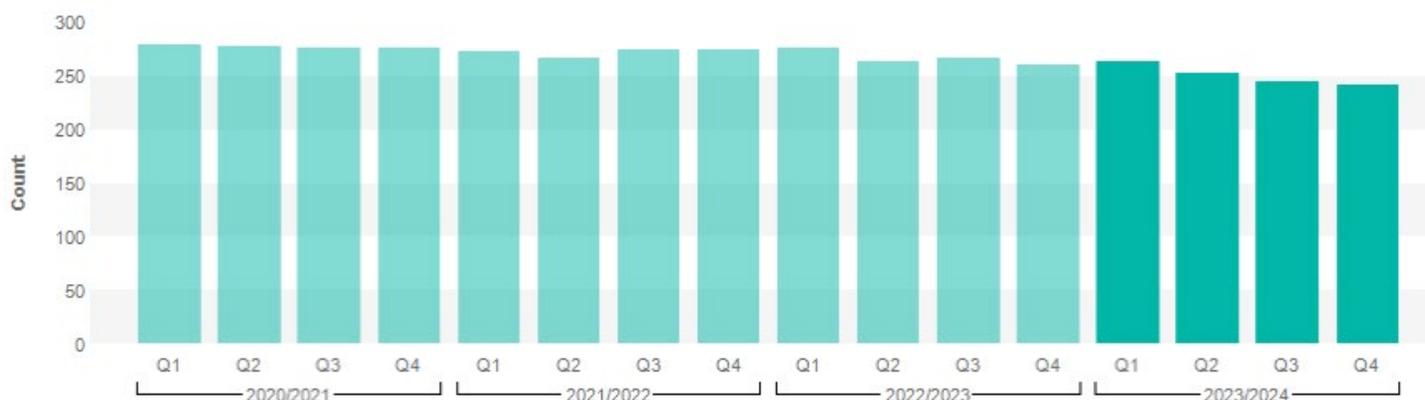
**Data and  
information used  
to understand  
local need**

# Children and young people in care (CYPIC) population

At the end of Q4 2023/24 York had 243 children and young people in care (excluding Short Breaks). The CYPIC population over time is shown in the chart and table below.

There is ongoing work to reduce the overall number of children in care. In the last quarter we can see the number of children and young people in care continues to fall and is within our expected range of 222-260.

## Number of children in care, excluding Short Breaks - (Snapshot) (by Quarter) - Historic



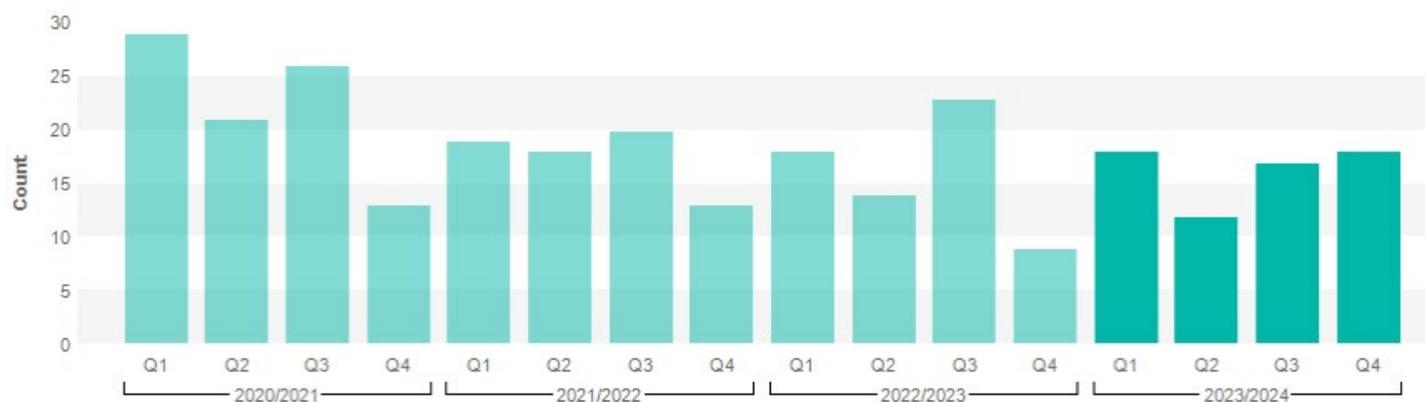
	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
2023/2024	264	254	246	243
2022/2023	278	266	269	262
2021/2022	274	268	276	276
2020/2021	281	279	278	278

Our local figure of 68.65 CYPIC per 10k of population is better than the regional figure of 81 per 10k and the national figure of 71 (per 10k). However, it remains above that of statistical neighbours (63.6 (per 10k)).

## Number of children and young people entering care

The chart and table below shows the number of children and young people entering care by quarter over the last 4 years. Whilst there is some variance from one to quarter to another the overall trend is a reduction in the number of children entering care.

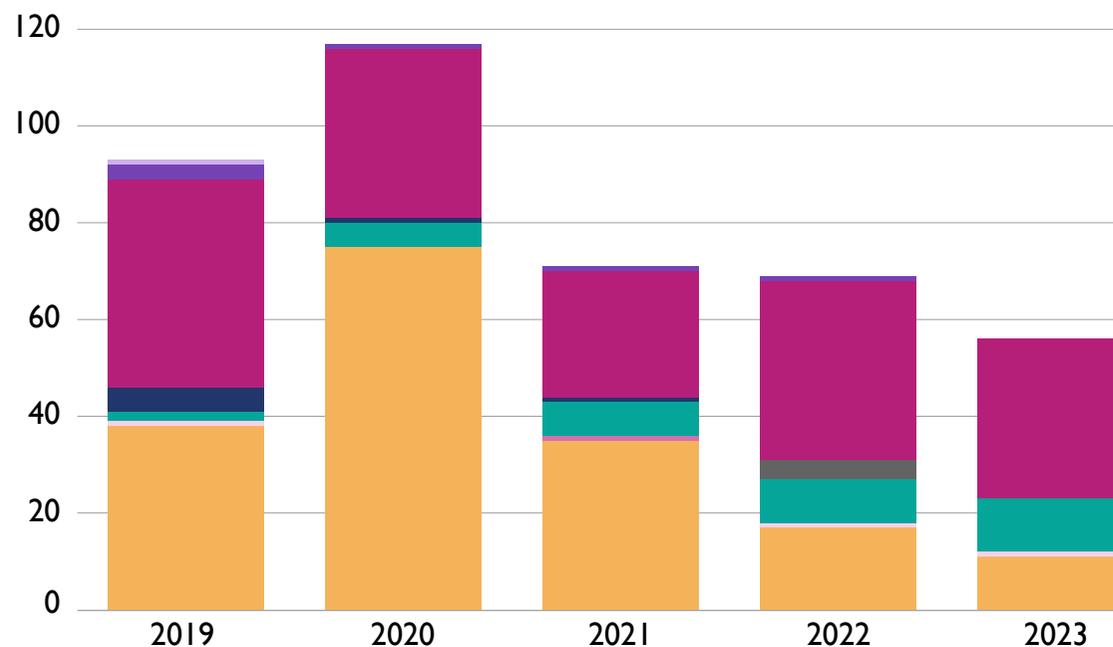
### Number of children entering care in period, excluding Short Breaks (by Quarter) - Historic



	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
2023/2024	18	12	17	18
2022/2023	18	14	23	9
2021/2022	19	18	20	13
2020/2021	29	21	26	13

## Initial legal status

The chart and table below shows a breakdown of initial legal status for children and young people entering care in recent years. The last full year of data (2023) shows that initially children enter care under Section 20 (33), followed by (11) under an interim care order and (11) under police protection in local authority accommodation.



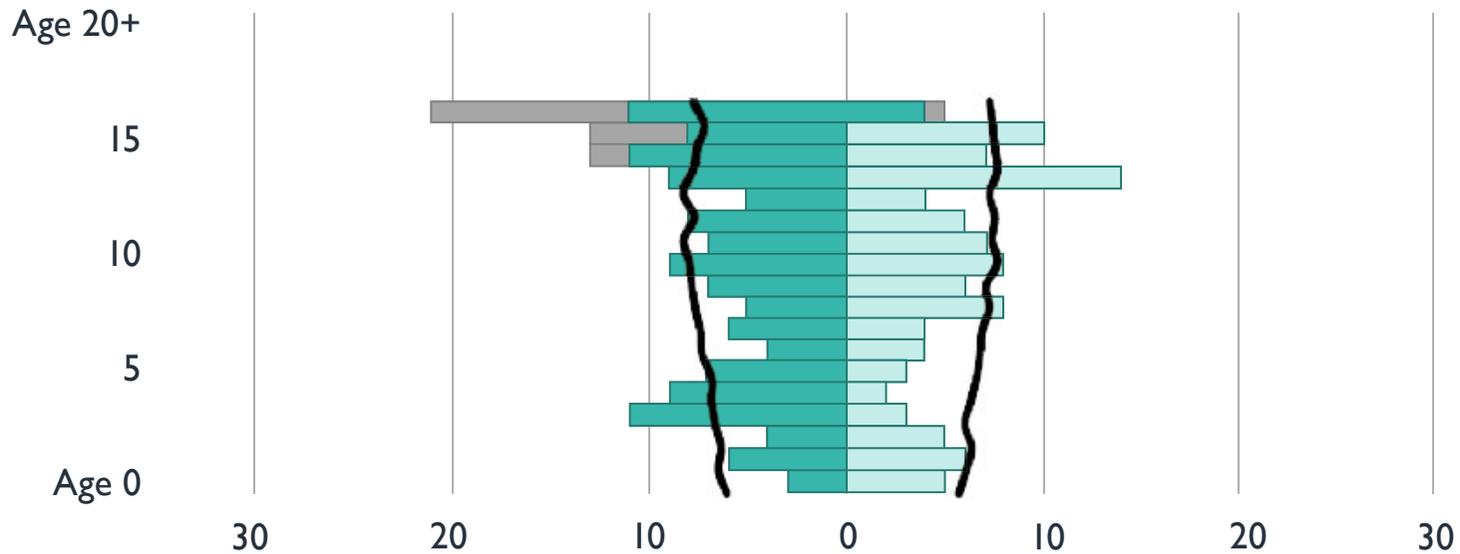
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
(blank)	1	0	0	0	0
V4 - Accommodated under an agreed series of short-term breaks, when agreements are recorded (ie NOT individual episodes of care)	3	1	1	1	0
V2 - Single period of accommodation under section 20	43	35	26	37	33
L2 Emergency Protection order	5	1	1	4	0
L1 - Under police protection and in local authority accommodation	2	5	7	9	11
J1 - On remand, or committed for trial or sentence, and accommodated by LA	1	0	0	1	1
C2 - Full care order	0	0	1	0	0
CI - Interim care order	38	75	35	17	11

# Age and gender profile

The chart below shows the age and gender profile of children and young people in care as of November 2023.

## Age and gender

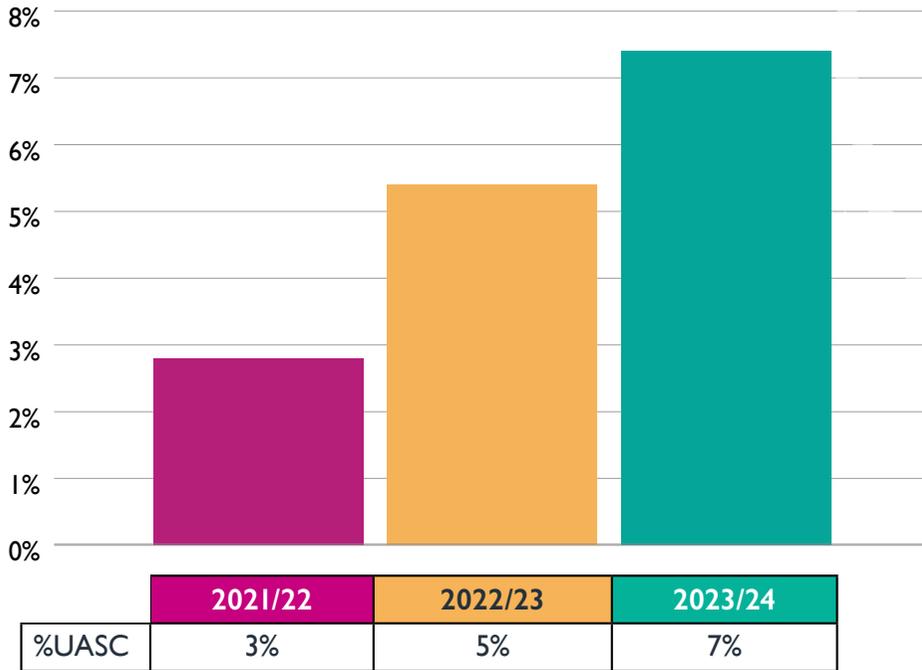
- 130 Males (51%)
- 17 UASC Males (7%)
- 106 Females (42%)
- 2 UASC Females (1%)
- 0 \*Other (not shown) (0%)
- 0-17 population estimate



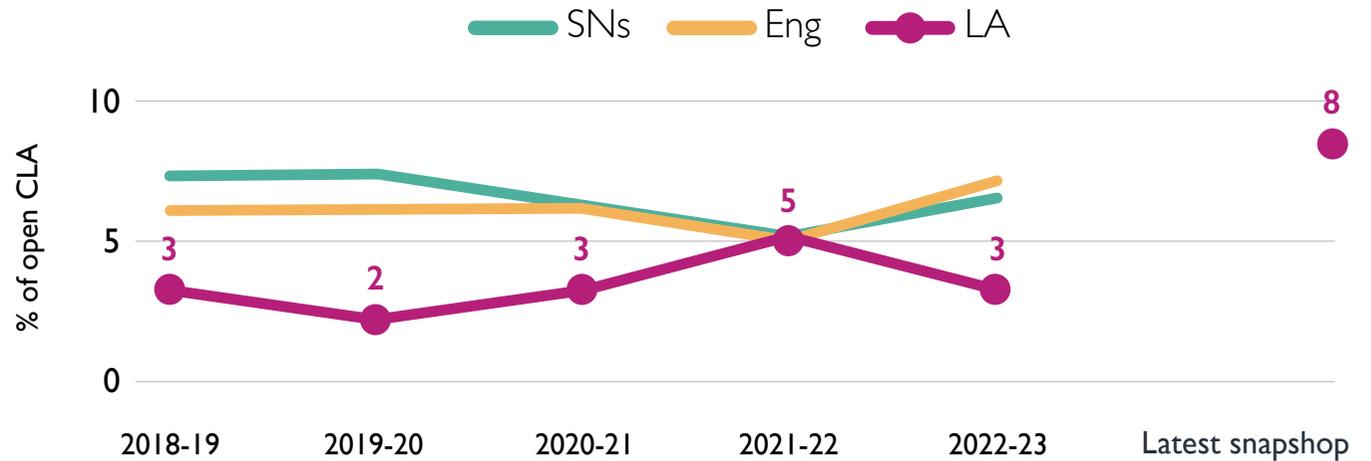
*Other\* includes not recorded, not stated or neither M/F*

# Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC)

**% of children in our care who are UASC**



**UASC as a percentage of CLA (snapshot)**

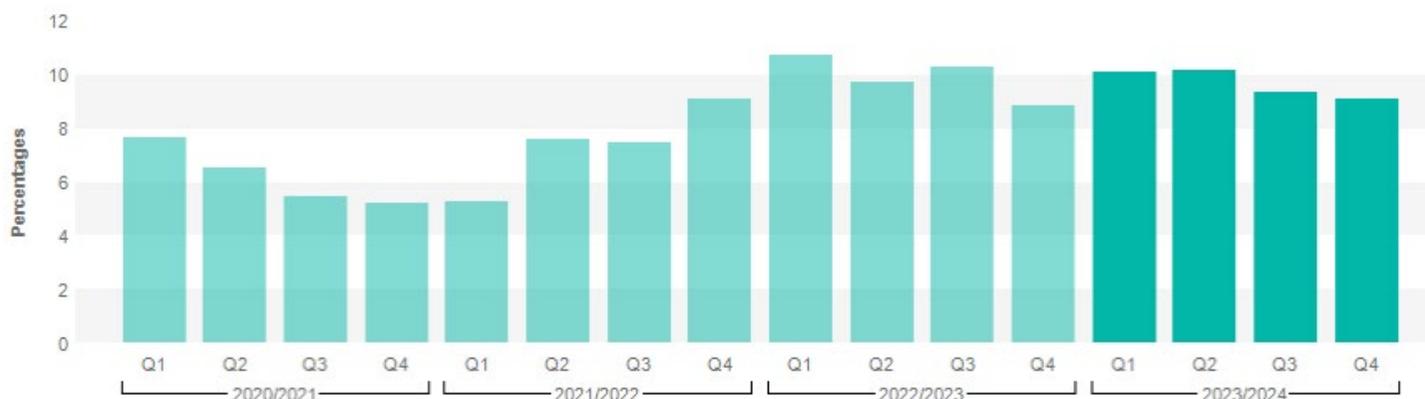


The chart to the right shows the age and gender profile of children and young people in care as of November 2023.

# Placement stability

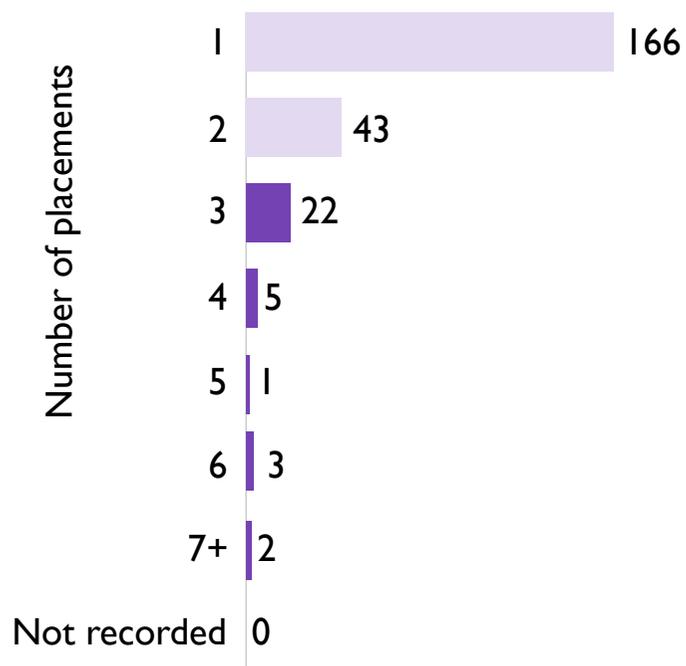
The chart and table below show that placement stability has decreased in the last 18 months. This reflects an active choice through the **Make York Home** programme to ensure children are in placements that best meet their needs, closer to their connected networks and continued challenges on the availability of suitable placements.

**% of children in care having 3 or more moves in the last 12 months - (Ssnapshot, YTD prior to 2016/17) (by Quarter) - Historic**



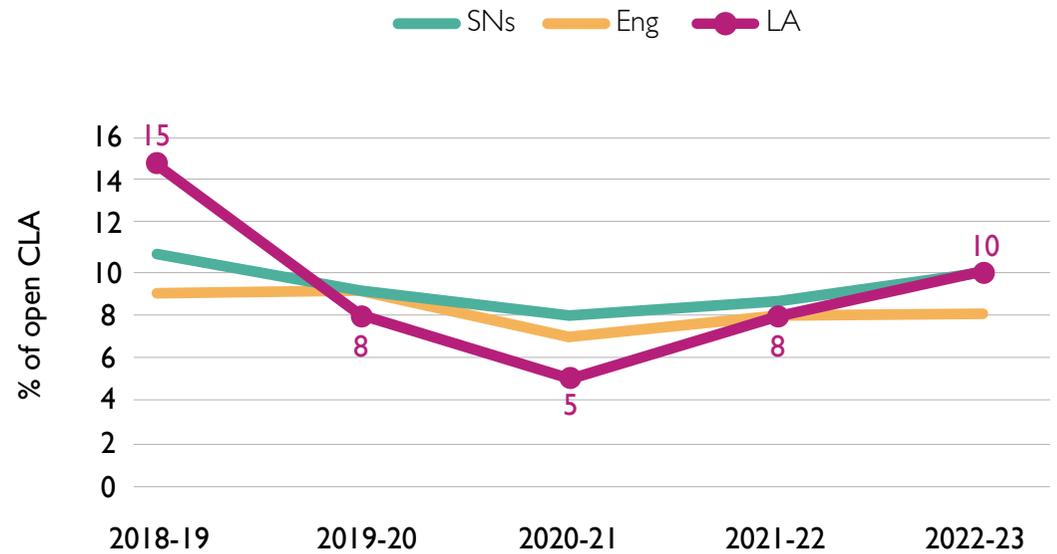
	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
2023/2024	10.51%	10.29%	9.40%	9.17%
2022/2023	10.78%	9.77%	10.34%	8.91%
2021/2022	5.32%	7.69%	7.52%	9.16%
2020/2021	7.72%	6.62%	5.56%	5.28%

The chart below shows short term placement stability in the last 12 months (from the CHAT 03/11/2023).



May include "status" changes as well as placements

Comparing short term placement stability



Due to limited data in the Annex A dataset, ChAT does not present short-term stability alongside published statistics



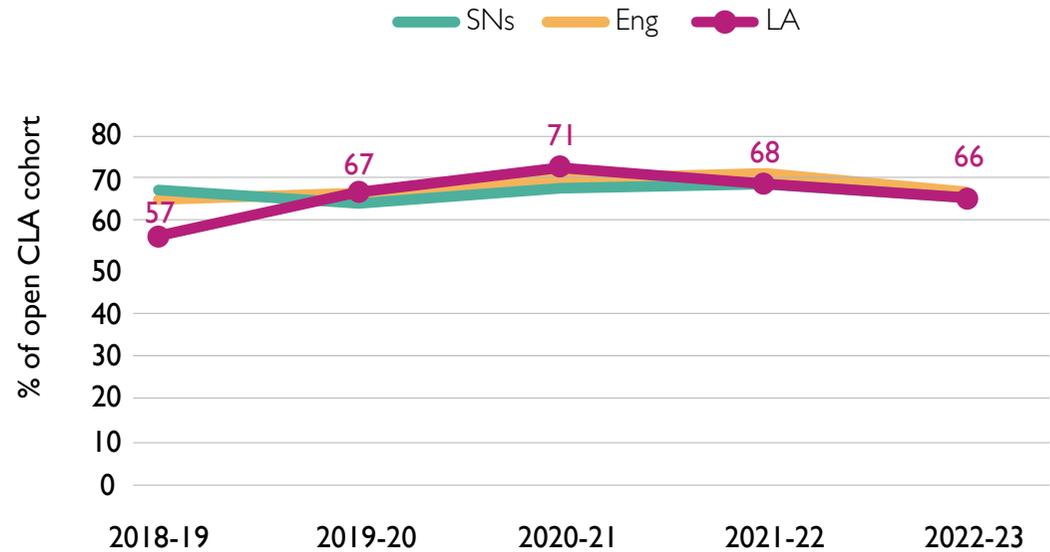
**The table below shows long term placement stability (from the CHAT 14/07/2023).**

*Duration of latest placement for each current CLA aged under 16 who have been looked after for 2.5 years or more*



*May include “status” changes as well as placements*

**Comparing short term placement stability**

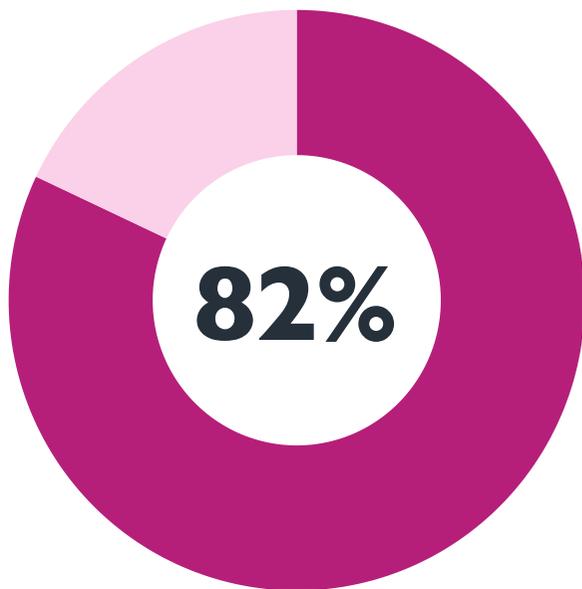


*Due to limited data in the Annex A dataset, ChAT does not present short-term stability alongside published statistics*

# Placements by type provision

The two charts below show the breakdown of foster placements.

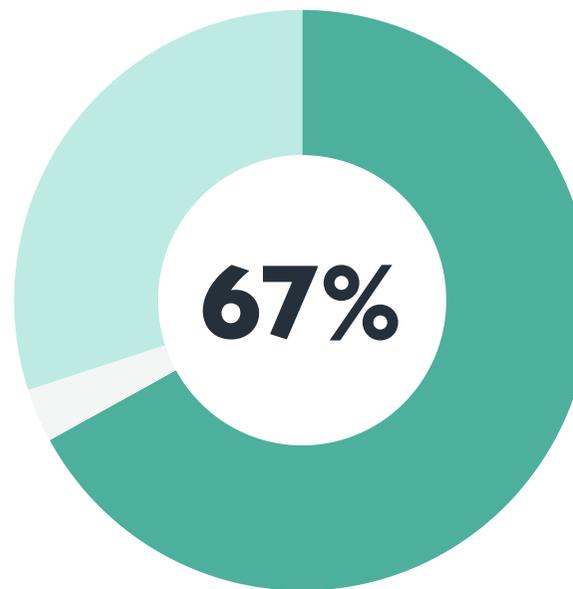
### Foster placements



- Foster placements
- Other placements
- Not recorded

LA 2021-2022 **76%**  
SNs 2021-2022 **67%**  
Eng 2021-2022 **68%**

### Own provision



- Foster placements
- Other placements
- Not recorded

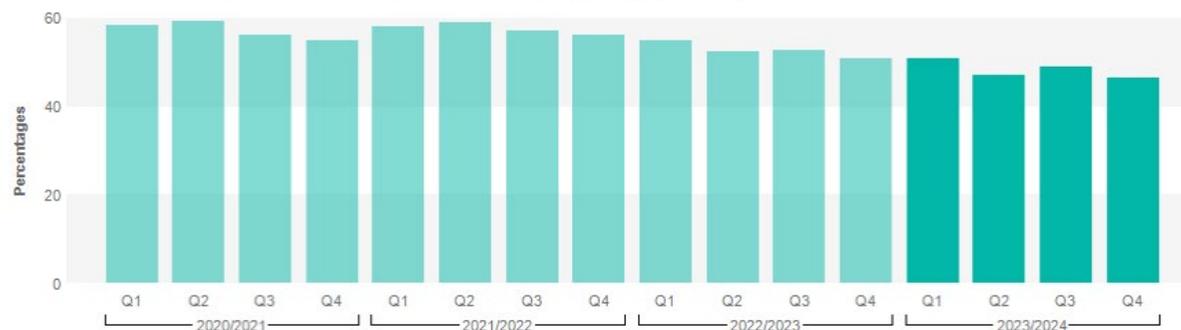
LA 2021-2022 **64%**  
SNs 2021-2022 **48%**  
Eng 2021-2022 **44%**

# Placement location

The chart and data below show the percentage of CYPIC living in York has fallen compared the previous figures. There are a few important points of note when interpreting this data:

- There has been significant work to support children and young people to safely live with their family. This has reduced the overall population of children and young people in care. This has had the greatest impact on those in care living in York. This could be interpreted as those living outside of York are likely to have a greater degree of complexity and more limited placement options.
- York is geographically a small local authority. Whilst we can see the percentage living in York has reduced the percentage living in York Local Authority provision has remained relatively stable at 63.39%.

**% of children in care living in York, excluding Short Breaks - (Snapshot) (by Quarter) - Historic**



	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
2023/2024	50.76%	46.85%	49.19%	46.91%
2022/2023	55.40%	52.63%	53.16%	51.15%
2021/2022	58.39%	59.33%	57.61%	56.52%
2020/2021	58.72%	59.50%	56.47%	55.40%

# Children and young people's views

We are committed to ensuring our young people have a voice, are listened to, and have real influence. The following is a summary of the views of children and young people in relation to foster and residential care, what matters to them and what they would want to see.

## Foster care:

- Knowledgeable, supportive carers, who are well trained and supported by the local authority.
- Training for foster carers around mental health and well-being is really important so that they are aware of how coming into care can impact a young person and how they can be support them.
- Having carers who you can trust, who notice how you're feeling and offer support when needed.
- Having carers who will celebrate important occasions like birthdays, come along to school plays and sports days and make plans to include them in activities at weekends, like a family would do.
- Location and being connected to a community is really important, as well as accessibility to the city centre and being able to travel easily to school and to see friends and family across York.
- Having access to a mobile phone and the internet and support from carers to stay in contact with friends and family is also really important in helping young people stay connected.
- For younger children having a place to play and let off steam is particularly important.
- A house that feels welcoming, that feels like home and where they feel are included and matter.
- Being provided with information about the foster carers and photographs of the home before they move in and information about who else lives there before they move in.
- Being able to talk to their social worker/ key worker if things aren't going well in the foster home.

## Residential care:

Having an individual key worker who you can trust and build a relationship with – ideally young people would like to choose the key worker that they feel most comfortable with and be able to request a change of worker if the relationship is not working.

- Knowing how to and being able to contact staff when you need to, especially your key worker, and who will deputise for your key worker if they are on leave or in an emergency.
- Having a good mixed range of staff including different age, gender and race, as well as staff with different specialist training (e.g. mental health, sexual health, education and employment support etc.) and bringing in specialist services other skills when needed.
- Staff and young people both having a good understanding of the rules and expectations within the setting, so they know what's expected of them and what will happen if they break the rules.
- Recognition and acknowledgement that as they get older, they are becoming an adult, and are likely to want to have more freedom and trust from staff.
- Staff should support young people with managing family relationships, promoting/supporting contact and should be able to supervise young people's contact with family where necessary.
- Access to a mobile phone and access to the internet is also an important priority for young people living in residential settings, or as a minimum having access to a communal phone.
- Consistency and continuity of staff wherever possible – young people coming into care have very likely been through a lot of changes already and really need some stability.
- High quality and personalised support to develop key skills to allow them to move towards independence – e.g. housekeeping / basic housework, cooking meals, setting up a bank account and basic money management, basic DIY skills, setting up utilities like gas and electric, how to get a GP appointment, accessing education and seeking employment, problem solving skills, writing a formal letter and understanding basic safety in the home. This all needs to be timely.
- Communal games and activities being widely available, which creates a more homely feel and breaks the ice when someone new joins in and offers connection if a young person is struggling.

## The building, facilities, and local area:

- A private bedroom.
- Private bathroom facilities wherever possible, especially if boys and girls are sharing.
- A communal kitchen in the building, which is accessible at all times, ideally along with basic facilities such as a kettle, microwave, sink and fridge in your own private room if possible.
- A communal living space, ideally with a choice of spaces to hang out in.
- A communal laundry space with a key to access it so that the facilities are looked after.
- Many young people feel it's very important to be near bus routes and supermarkets – young people in accommodation will be unable to drive, so being able to travel independently and have easy access to a supermarket, a bank/ cashpoint, library and GP surgery close by is fundamental.
- Many young people also feel it's important to be close to leisure facilities or to be able to travel to these by bus easily from wherever they are living to be able to make more local connections.



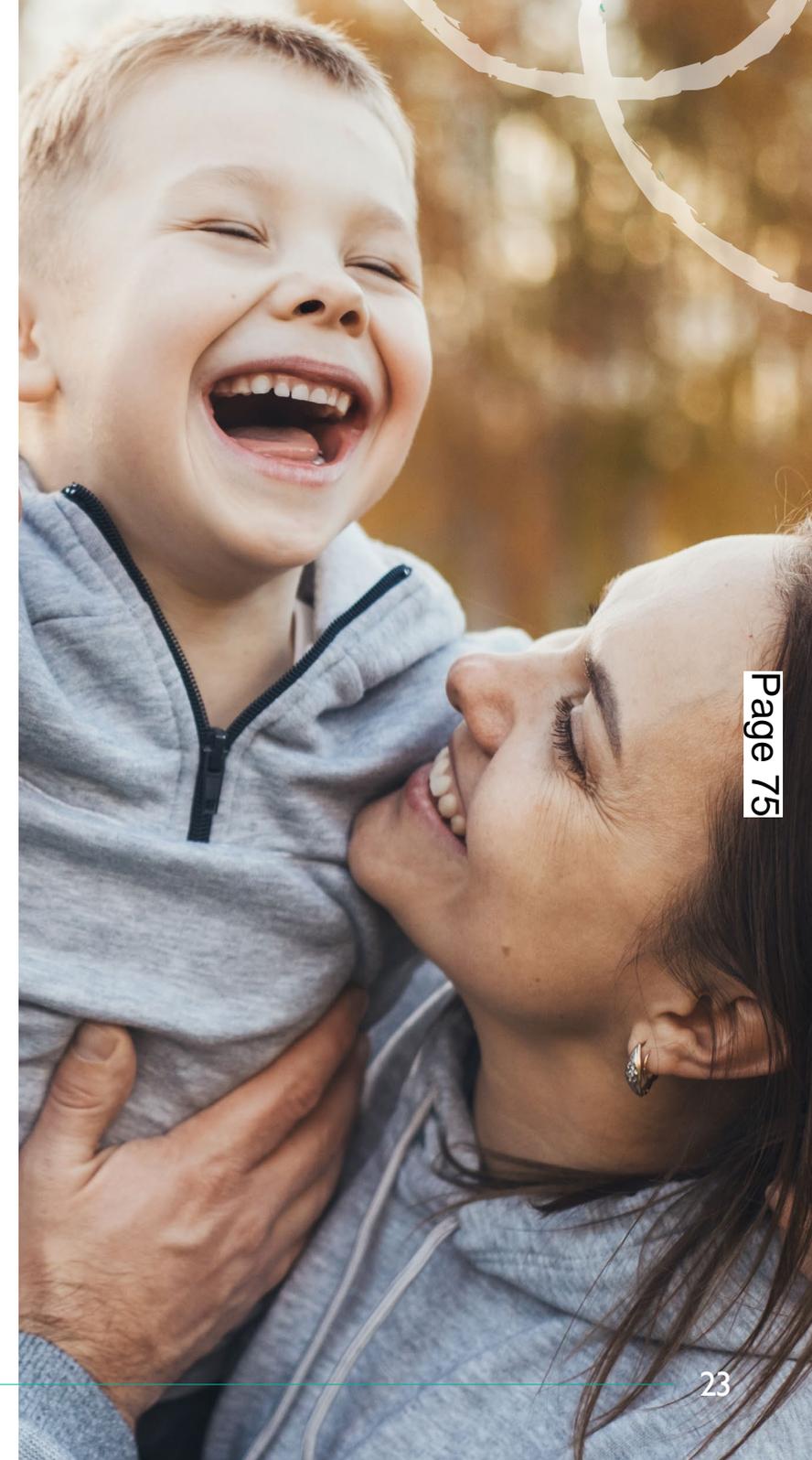
# Developing our provision

## Local need: Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children

The National Transfer Scheme (NTS) protocol for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children has been established to enable the safe transfer of unaccompanied children in the UK from one local authority to another local authority. This is in response to the increasing number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children seeking safety and refuge in the U.K and all local authorities have a mandatory duty to comply with these regulations.

We want the City of York to be a place of safety for these children; where they feel welcomed, valued and where they can develop a sense of belonging. We have therefore taken the decision to invest in and develop bespoke accommodation and support. Through working with Migration Yorkshire, we will identify children from the same country of origin, who share the same language, culture, and heritage and support them to live together and integrate into their wider community.

We will use capital funds to purchase 2 x 4-bedroom properties, providing appropriate support funded directly from the Home Office, delivered through our supported accommodation and Staying Close team, we will be able to successfully provide accommodation and support within the City of York.



## Local need: Supported accommodation / Staying Close

The introduction of the Supported Accommodation Regulations (2023) means that we will be registered by Ofsted to provide accommodation and support within the City of York for young people aged 16-18 years old through our supported accommodation offer.

Our service model means that we are able to provide single person accommodation, under a range of options, to support young people grow into independence in a meaningful and considered way. We will provide support through our staying close team as well as our broader residential services to ensure that young people receive the right balance between being supported and being autonomous and independent, so they can grow in confidence and develop lifelong skills. Young people having their own place, with their own front door and key is both a powerful message and an essential building block to supporting young people towards a brighter future.

We have also been working hard with colleagues in housing to cultivate a developing sense of responsibility towards young people in the City of York, reframing the narrative as 'our young people' and changing the questions asked to 'what are we going to do' to improve outcomes.

We have developed our 'staying close' offer; it's focus is on supporting young people leaving residential / semi -independent and 'other' care settings and into independence. The team provide a wide range of support options for young people,

with their aim of securing safe and stable accommodation of their own. Our approach to supported accommodation is about developing a menu of options for both accommodation and types of support provided:

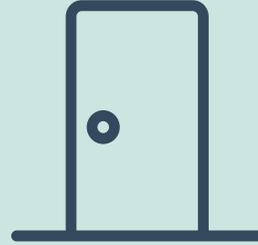






### **Taster flat**

- 28 day experience to assess and experience what is it like to live independently.
- Access to support 24/7 and placement to return to at any time during the period.



### **Trainer flat**

- Up to 6 months living independently with the option of taking on the long term tenancy or moving into an area of choice within York/
- Access to support 24/7
- Focused support from Staying Close Team (wellbeing, employment, networks and connections)



### **Own tenancy**

- Support to acquire own tenancy in your own right
- Ongoing support from Staying Close and Pathway Team
- Focussed support on areas such as wellbeing, employment and developing connection sand networks.

### **Our key priorities:**

- Recruitment and embedding of the Staying Close Team
- Refurbishment of properties
- Purchase of 2 x properties to support UASC
- Development of 3 year Supported Accommodation Strategy

## Local need: Residential provision and foster care

We are experiencing a significant demand foster care and residential placements, which is consistent with a national trend in children entering care; the pressures of supporting unaccompanied asylum-seeking children; foster carers leaving their role and the challenges of recruiting new foster carers. We also have our own legacy of not having our own in-house residential provision, which has meant that we have commissioned these placements, usually outside of the city.

It has been these drivers and our commitment to providing exceptional homes for children and young people that has led to the development of our plan.

We have developed our own residential model, Together, WE Can and provision Wenlock Terrace and Ousecliffe House in York. This service is a new multi-building registration that provides 6 residential placements across both houses and was registered in April 2024.

The 'Together, WE Can' model takes inspiration from the No Wrong Door and will provide a range of service both in relation to emergency placement provision and edge of care support to prevent admissions into residential care.

This new service will alleviate placement pressure and afford practitioners time and space to undertake work with family's, based on Family Seeing and Signs of Safety and together with a newly developed reunification strategy, we should see fewer

young people entering care and those who do, a much quicker and more supportive return home to family networks.

The fostering service now has an experienced registered manager and together with the Head of Resources and wider fostering colleagues, is undertaking a root and branch review of the service. The theme of this review is to 'make things better, for everyone'.

The aim of this review is to improve workstreams, efficiency and to increase the number of inhouse foster carers in York. There is significant work being undertaken in respect of this and we are also entering a service level agreement with colleagues from within the marketing team to devise a recruitment strategy that will develop our branding, advertising and digital platform to support this.

Our predicted net increase in terms of need is between 10-15 new foster carers per annum to meet our existing and forecasting needs. This considers the work undertaken by the edge of care team and emergency residential provision and reunification strategy which seeks to reduce and stabilise the population of looked after children in the context of teenagers being the most challenging to place.

Within the context of all of this is the development of our retention strategy, which will be aligned to our fostering skills matrix and fee structure and high levels of investment in our foster carers in relation to support and training. This work is already underway and our aim is to have a market competitive, fair and progressive approach to our fostering provision.

### Our key priorities;

- Registration and opening of Wenlock Terrace and Ousecliffe House
- Recruitment of Clinical Psychologist for Together, WE Can service
- Recruitment of Specialist Speech and Language Therapist
- Complete full root and branch review to improve systems and process within the fostering service.
- Establish SLA with marketing to have a clear recruitment strategy for foster carers.



## Quality assurance approach to placements

Quality assurance of foster placements continues to remain a focus and through the commencement of the review of the service, we have identified key priorities for 24/25.

There are a number of different tools that are used to benchmark and measure the quality of placements. For example, being a member of the White Rose Framework affords us the quality assurance instruments and assurances that are built into those commissioning arrangements.

We follow our statutory requirements in terms of reviewing foster carers annually as well as the looked after children's review, led by the IRO service, that provides us with feedback.

All foster carers should receive regular supervision and the quality of provision is included in this personal performance appraisal. We will strengthen the alignment of this work to our new skills and fee structure to make the process more robust.

We currently work with a number of IFA providers which has been necessary due to legacy pressures on the availability internal provision. Most of these placements are achieving good outcomes for children, but we recognise a number of situations where immediate notice decisions have been made without proper consideration of the child and ability of our service to provide a well-matched alternative. This is an issue we aim to address through a more robust commissioning process and holding IFA's to account of decision making.

As part of the review of the Fostering Service our overall improvement and development plan has been redeveloped. The actions that arise from this will ensure that the recruitment of foster carers will be more effective, timely and yield more foster carers.

The vital ongoing support and personal development of foster carers, linking to current best practice in and around trauma and resilience has impacted on the numbers of placement break downs and our overall retention. As such we are reviewing and developing the ongoing package of training and support to foster carers to improve recruitment and retention.

### **Our key priorities;**

- Complete the review of the Fostering Service and share learning.
- Agree ongoing training package for foster carers.
- Review supervision process to align to an appraisal linked to fees and skills framework.
- Increase foster carers and target particular areas (faith).

## **Implementation and oversight**

The delivery of this Sufficiency Strategy will be led by the Head of Resources. The actions to deliver this strategy are contained in the Children's Services Service Plan and within relevant Team Plans.

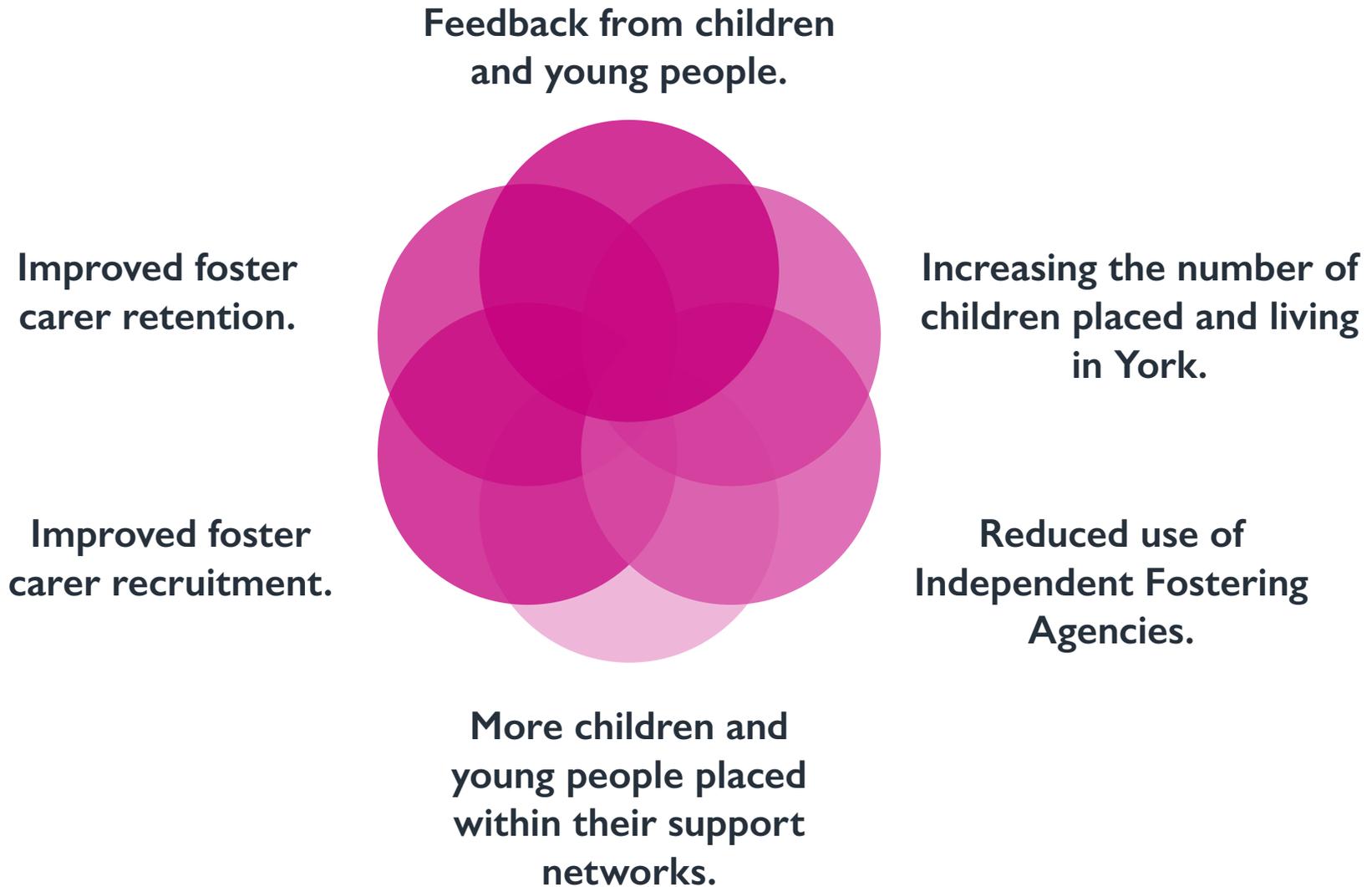
The Head of Resources will produce and share quarterly and annual reports to demonstrate progress in delivering this strategy and any changes to demand need that require further action.

The annual report will be shared through the Assurance and Ambition Board as well as the Corporate Parenting Board.



## How we will know the difference we are making

We will triangulate information from different sources to help us understand the impact of this sufficiency strategy. These include but are not limited to:

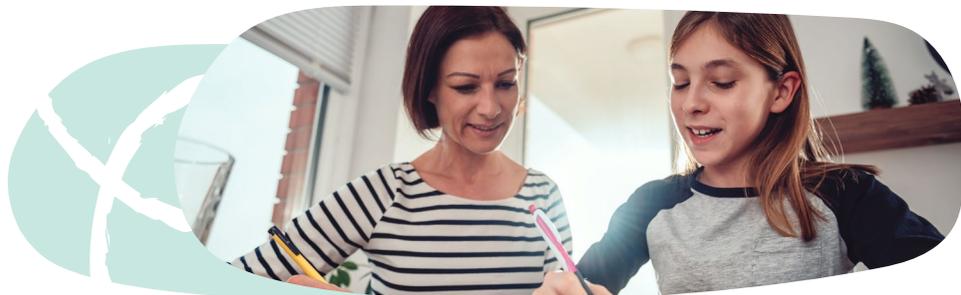


# Delivering our strategy

*‘Children and young people growing up, living, and thriving in York – close to their families and connected networks’.*

Based on the analysis of local need and in line with our commitment to looked after children and care leavers; these are our outcomes for the period of this strategy.

- We will develop our own inhouse residential provision, based on the Together, WE Can model, providing much needed residential services for those young people who require this level of care and support.
- We will continue to develop and embed our Supported Accommodation and Staying Close strategy, offering a range of accommodation and support options for young people leaving care and working towards independence.
- We will develop and strengthen our visibility across the city; continuing to build on our brand and commission a strong digital medial platform to engage and inform more widely about fostering.



- We will complete our whole service review of fostering, fulfilling our ambition of recruiting an additional fifty fostering households (over five years). Our new fostering strategy will ensure we;
  - » Pay fairly and pay differently - We will have a fair and competitive payment structure that rewards all of our foster carers, whilst also acknowledging the specific skills and expertise of our specialist foster carers in looking after children and young people with the most complex needs.
  - » Offer more and provide better support - Our foster carers advocate, care for and love the children and young people placed with them as if they were their own, and in doing so, provide the best possible homes for children in care. We know however, that occasionally, the fostering role can be overwhelming, frustrating, sometimes too much and scary. We know it is at this point that we need to provide high quality, effective and meaningful support.
  - » Listen better and act quicker - There are times foster carers need a quick answer or to have access to someone to talk through a problem. We recognise the complexity of fostering and the wide range of dilemmas that are often faced daily. Having someone at the end of the phone or in person at these times is important in terms of support, building resilience and confidence.

- » Make the fostering role more visible and more accessible – We have created a dedicated budget to support marketing and communication. We will work with partners to raise awareness of the fostering role and develop a ‘toolkit’ of key messages.
- » Offer more training to more skilled carers - We will continue working with our fostering community to develop and shape our training offer to ensure this meets the needs of foster carers and the children and young people they care for.
- We will recruit clinical specialists in Psychology and Speech and Language Therapy to work within children’s social care, bringing much needed expertise and skills in delivering on our ‘building brighter futures model’.
- We will continue to work with key partners and agencies in delivering on our priorities; providing stable homes, trauma informed care and support and realising the potential of every child and young person.



If you would like this document in an alternative format, please contact:

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 [ycc@york.gov.uk](mailto:ycc@york.gov.uk)

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 @cityofyork

It is available in the following languages:

我們也用您們的語言提供這個信息 (Cantonese)

এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় দেয়া যেতে পারে। (Bengali)

Ta informacja może być dostarczona w twoim własnym języku. (Polish)

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde almanız mümkündür. (Turkish)

یہ معلومات آپ کی اپنی زبان (بولی) میں بھی مہیا کی جاسکتی ہیں۔ (Urdu)

Publication date: October 2024

For further information: West Offices, Station Rise, York YO1 6GA





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**Children, Culture and Communities Scrutiny Committee    3 December 2024**

Report of the Corporate Director of Children and Education

**Corporate Parenting Annual Report – 2023/24****Summary**

1. This report presents the 2023/24 Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Board (Annex A). It highlights our progress in achieving the aspirations outlined in the Corporate Parenting Strategy and reflects on the Board's work over the past year.

**Background**

2. There is arguably no greater responsibility the council holds than as corporate parent to children and young people in care. We are dedicated to York being an effective, caring, and ambitious corporate parent. Our goal is to ensure that children in our care and care leavers receive the highest standard of care and support.
3. City of York Council provides care for children and young people who are unable to remain with their parents. When a child comes into our care, the Council assumes the role of a corporate parent. This means we are responsible for ensuring these children receive the same care, support, and opportunities that any loving parent would provide. A good corporate parent always asks: "If this were my child, would this be good enough?"
4. The Corporate Parenting Board leads this vital work, focusing on the needs of children and young people in care, as well as those who have left care. The Board collaborates with Council members, staff, partner organisations, and the children and young people themselves to champion their needs and ensure their well-being.

5. The 2023/24 Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Board is provided as Annex A. It is important to note that this highlights our progress in 2023/24 but does not include more recent achievements. The 2024/25 Annual Report will include progress in relation to:
  - a. The council's commitment to treat care experience as if it was a protected characteristic.
  - b. The work of the corporate parenting sub-groups (health, housing and education) which are currently being piloted.
  - c. The 'Mind your language' campaign. This is in response to how we speak about and to young people and the impact of our language.
  - d. Our new Enhanced Offer for Care Leavers.
  - e. The broader delivery of our Corporate Parenting Strategy.

### **Co-Production**

6. In recent years we have taken clear steps to strengthen young people's voice and influence in how we work as Corporate Parents. This includes developing an award-winning model of care experienced 'Corporate Parenting Advisors' to help young people have a voice and be heard.
7. Our Corporate Parenting Board is now co-chaired with care experienced people. As co-chairs, Lauren and Owen have provided a foreword to the Corporate Parenting Annual Report reflecting their views on progress over the last year.
8. As well as young people co-chairing the Corporate Parenting Board we know we have good opportunities for children and young people to share their views and help us design services. Show Me That I Matter, and I Still Matter are the groups that make up York's Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum. In addition, we work together with young people to support specific projects, training, recruitment, regional events, national events and our now regular programme of celebration events. In 2023/24 over 50 care experienced young people have been supported to share their views through these forums.

9. Last year we introduced our new All Together Active group for care experienced young people that want more active and social activities. This is working as a great tool to introduce more young people into other participation groups. Below is a summary of some of the key themes we have been able to support young people to be involved in:
  - a. The advisory group for mental health.
  - b. Working with the fostering team on foster carer recruitment and training.
  - c. Sharing experiences of having an Independent Visitor.
  - d. Developing our approach to Protected Characteristics.
  - e. Building on the work to further improve the joint housing protocol for care leavers.
  - f. Input into the leaving care offer.
  - g. The co-production of 'Project Wenlock' - our new residential offer for children and young people.
  - h. Supported young people to share their views around the importance of language in sessions with all children's services staff and the safeguarding partnership.

### **Council Plan**

10. One City, for all, the City of York Council's Council Plan (2023-2027), sets out the council's vision and priorities. Our corporate parenting responsibilities can be seen to run through all seven priority areas.
  - a. Health and wellbeing: A health generating city, for children and adults
  - b. Education and skills: High quality skills and learning for all
  - c. Economy and good employment: A fair, thriving, green economy for all
  - d. Transport: Sustainable accessible transport for all
  - e. Housing: Increasing the supply of affordable housing
  - f. Sustainability: Cutting carbon, enhancing the environment for our future
  - g. How the council operates

11. The Council Plan also makes direct reference to our role as Corporate Parents and the actions we will take.
  - a. 4.3. Continue our improvement journey to deliver good and outstanding children's services with the voice of the child heard throughout all council operations.
  - b. 4.4. Embed corporate parenting so children in care and care leavers can thrive.
  - c. 5.2. Review the fostering service, including the support to foster carers and kinship carers.
12. In 2023/24, we launched a new Corporate Parenting Strategy. This strategy sets out our goals for children and young people in care, as well as our long-term ambitions for care-experienced young people as they transition to adulthood. A copy of the Corporate Parenting Strategy has been provided in Annex B.
13. Although there is no direct statutory obligation to create a Corporate Parenting Board, local authorities are required to have mechanisms in place to fulfil their corporate parenting responsibilities. The establishment of a Corporate Parenting Board is widely recognised as a best-practice approach to meet these statutory duties by:
  - a. Overseeing our corporate parenting responsibilities.
  - b. Ensuring that the Corporate Parenting principles are embedded in practice.
  - c. Driving forward our local Corporate Parenting Strategy for children in our care and care leavers.
  - d. Providing a platform for collaboration with children, young people, and partners.
14. In November the government published 'Keeping children safe, helping families thrive' (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-helping-families-thrive>). This policy statements sets out the governments proposals for reform of the social care system. The paper includes a wide range of reforms. Of relevance to this report are proposals to extend corporate parenting responsibilities to partners.
  - a. "We plan to extend corporate parenting responsibilities to government departments and relevant public bodies to create a culture change in which we realise our shared ambition to support

children in care and care leavers. In this role, all “corporate parents” can help to break down barriers to good outcomes for care experienced children and young people in different ways, for example, by: ensuring that relevant policies and services that impact on children in care and care leavers’ lives take account of their additional needs and circumstances; taking steps to reduce the stigma or discrimination they face; or providing additional support as a parent or family member might.”

15. We are confident the steps we are already taking locally to include partners on the Corporate Parenting Board and the recent decision to treat care experience as if it was a protected characteristic puts us in a good position to respond to this policy direction. We will support care experienced young people to be engaged in the development of the new policy wherever possible and will ensure York takes any opportunities to strengthen our role as a good and caring corporate parent.

### **Implications**

16. Given there are no decisions to be made in relation to this paper there are no applicable implications to review.

### **Risk Management**

17. There are no specific risks identified within this report. The Corporate Parenting Board oversees the implementation of the Corporate Parenting Strategy. Risks are managed through this board and the associated actions plans drive forward different parts of the strategy.

### **Recommendations**

18. To note and comment upon the Corporate Parenting Annual report for 2023/24.

Reason: So that members are updated on the work of the Corporate Parenting Board.

**Contact Details**

**Author:**  
**Niall McVicar**  
Head of Innovation and  
Children's Champion

**Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**  
**Martin Kelly**  
Corporate Director of Children and Education

**Report**  **Date** 22 November 2024  
**Approved**

**Wards Affected:** *List wards or tick box to indicate all* **All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Annexes**

Annex A: Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2023-24  
Annex B: Corporate Parenting Strategy 2024-2027



# City of York – Corporate Parenting Board

## Annual Report 2023/24

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## ■ Introducing our annual report – Our Corporate Parenting Board Chairs

### **Lauren and Owen - Co-Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board**

Hi, we are co-chairs of the corporate parenting board, we sit alongside Councillor Bob Webb, chairing the Corporate Parenting Board meeting. Our role in the meeting is to help ensure all voices are heard, children in care, care leavers and professionals.

Being part of the Corporate Parenting Board provides a platform to express and reflect on issues that are raised and that represent the majority of young people in care and care leavers, such as housing, education, health and support. The role enables us to contribute, challenge and further understand decisions made by the local council that will affect children and young people in care and care leavers who access support and services. Having us co-chair the board shows a recognition for young people's voice and allows for an advanced look on situations being lived out by those in or those who have left care. The role has changed the dynamic and focus of the Corporate Parenting Board in such a positive way.

The voice of young people finally sits at the head of the table.

### **Councillor Bob Webb, Co-Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board**

I would like to open by saying thank you to all of the members of the Corporate Parenting Board who have worked so hard this year. I would also like to welcome new members to the board particularly from Health and the Department for Work and Pensions. In my first full year as one of the chairs of this Board I am really proud of how the board has transformed into a high functioning space dedicated to improving the lives for our Care-Experienced young people.

I would also like to thank my co-chairs who have use their lived experience, alongside their intelligence, excellent communication skills and attention to detail to really provide challenge to corporate parents in York.

I am pleased that the Co-production approach taken in developing 'Together We Can' was nominated for a national award, proving that York is starting to be recognised for the changes that have taken place in recent times. This co-production is also clearly evident in Wenlock Terrace, this space is coming into its own in supporting young people to stay in their community and the work that young people have put into making it a welcoming space is excellent.



Again regarding welcoming spaces I am glad that we have invested in a Welcome Centre which will provide accommodation and support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. We have also created a dedicated social work post to support their needs. This is exactly the type of approach that York should be taking as a City of Sanctuary.

It is excellent to see how Signs of Safety and Family Seeing are becoming firmly embedded in Social Work practise and this is really beginning to show benefits for our young people's wellbeing. This has been followed up with Signs of Belonging, an approach to support children to build their networks. Further to these improvements in practise the City of York Council secured funding to develop the Family Seeing approach further and recruit a dedicated Family Seeing Coordinator.

This year has also seen a review of our Fostering offer as a City and the results of this review are due soon and I know that this will be something to focus on in the next few months. In the meantime there is an ongoing recruitment campaign for new Foster Carers. Foster Carers are such an important part of Childrens' Services in York and they rightly deserve our thanks.

As a corporate parent, like any parent, I am really proud of our young people's achievements and I am very happy that the Virtual School has started to hold Celebration Events to celebrate these successes.

Earlier in the year we were visited by the Government's National Advisor for Care Leavers. This visit certainly has sparked a few ideas that are outlined in the main body of the report. The key points I'd highlight are that we are trialling subgroups of the Corporate Parenting Board in Health, Housing and Education to support progress in those areas; inviting the Department for Work and Pensions to join the board; developing a better housing protocol and recruiting an opportunity broker to support care-experienced people's journey into employment and training.

Finally, I am pleased by the attention that has been given to reviewing our local offer. By making this a more bespoke offer, tailored to individuals, we can more closely support young people to achieve the outcomes that they want.

As always I am incredibly proud to be a corporate parent and I am very proud of the work of the corporate parenting board this year.

## ■ The Corporate Parenting Board

We are committed to York being an effective, caring, and ambitious corporate parent and we will do everything we can to make sure that children in our care and care leavers receive the best possible care and support.

City of York Council looks after a number of children and young people who are unable to remain in the care of their parents. When a child enters our care, the Council takes on the a special role called 'corporate parenting'. This means the Council is responsible for ensuring these children receive the same care and opportunities as any loving parent would provide. A good corporate parent always asks, "If this were my child, would this be good enough?"

The Corporate Parenting Board leads this effort, focusing on the needs of children and young people in our care, as well as those who have left our care. The Board works with Council members, staff, partner agencies, and the children and young people themselves to champion their needs and ensure their well-being.

In 2023/24, a new Corporate Parenting Strategy was launched. This new strategy set out our goals for children and young people in our care and our long-term ambitions for care-experienced young people as they become adults.

This is the 2023/24 Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Board. This report outlines progress in achieving the aspirations set out in the Corporate Parenting Strategy and the work of the Corporate Parenting Board in the last year.

## ■ Our Strategic Priorities

The report is grouped around the six strategic priorities set out in the Corporate Parenting Strategy.



## ■ Where you live

### What our strategy says:

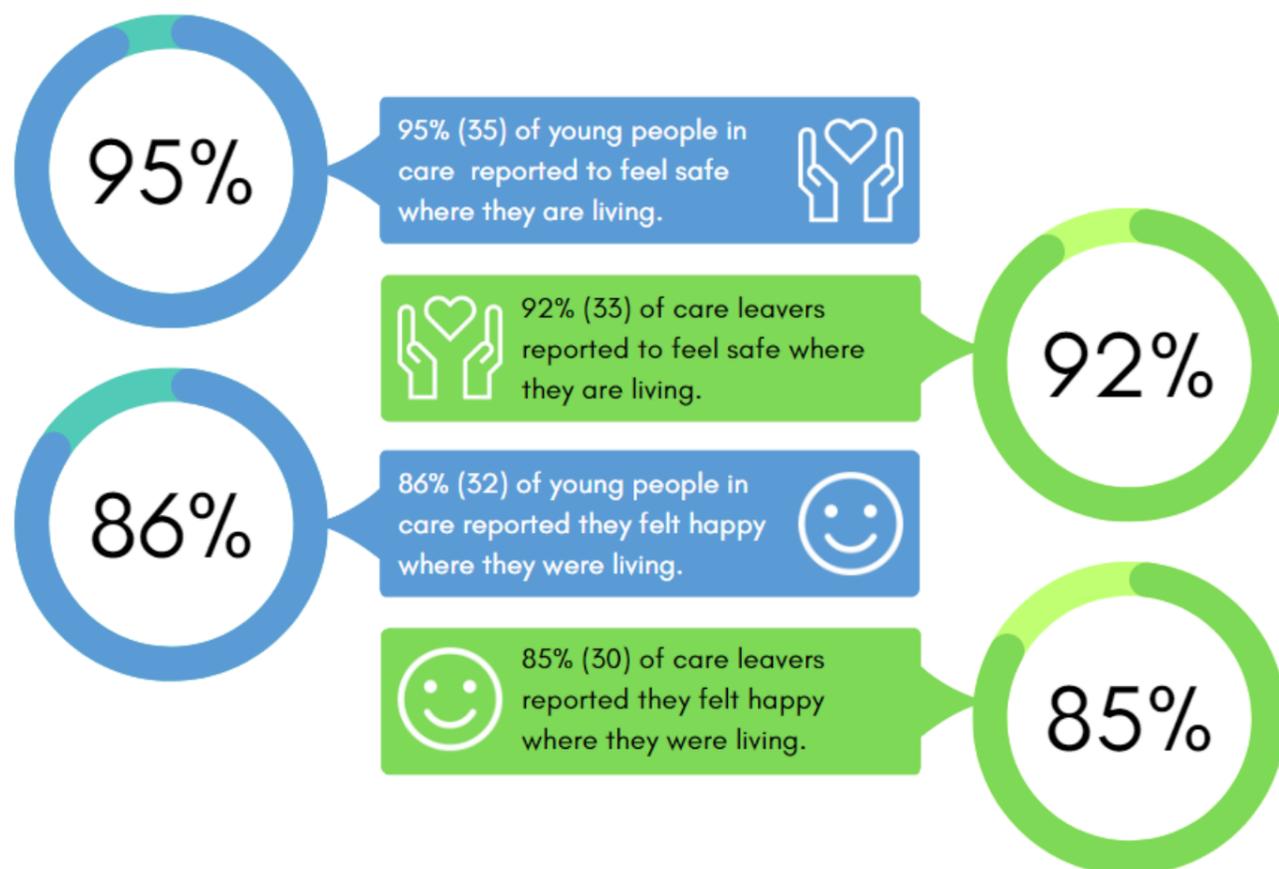
We will do our best to find you carers who will get to know you and help you feel safe, comfortable and cared for. We will listen to you so we can try to find you the right place to live.

We recognise the need to develop our Sufficiency Strategy so that there are more options for where children and young people in care can live.

### What Children and Young People tell us

The Corporate Parenting Board received the findings from the U Matter report for 2023. The U Matter Survey is a chance for children and young people in and leaving care to feedback to the City of York Council about their experiences of being in and leaving care. The U Matter survey covered different parts of young people's lives including where they live.

The 2023 U Matter survey asked young people if they felt safe and happy where they are living.



## Together WE Can

The Corporate Parenting Board reviewed the proposed development of Together WE Can. Together, WE Can is the service model for our new residential provision in York. This is a unique model that sees residential provision in a much broader context of how and why young people enter and leave children's homes. This will further strengthen our sufficiency to avoid unregulated provision going forward.

The Together, WE Can team includes a Clinical Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist, Police Officer and range of residential care practitioners who all work together with other agencies. We are also recruiting a substance misuse worker (in partnership with Public Health), who will work within this service in order to have a greater reach and impact.

Young people were heavily involved throughout the development of Together WE Can. Young people directly spoke at the Corporate Parenting Board about how positive the experience had been. Co-production with young people for Together WE Can was nominated for a national award reflecting the quality of this work. Young people have had extensive and authentic involvement in the recruitment of staff including for Together WE Can. This resulted on some occasions where there were different views on the best appointment and we consciously went with the views of young people.

Together WE Can represents an investment of around £1 million and is now open.

### Support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

The board discussed proposals to develop better support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC). Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) are children and young people who are seeking asylum in the UK but who have been separated from their parents or carers.

Our aim is that the City of York is leading the way in providing a caring, compassionate, and safe city for all young people. We are committed to ensuring that our core values are demonstrated through our actions by our response to providing accommodation and support that will enable these young people to develop into successful adults and who go on to make a positive contribution to their communities and the City of York as a whole. The board heard how we have been challenged by the lack of provision in the City, this has resulted in us placing young people in external arrangements.

As a result we have created a dedicated social worker post focused on the needs of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC). This is alongside an investment of £275k to develop a Welcome Centre which will provide dedicated accommodation and support enabling more UASC to stay in York.

## Fostering and Sufficiency

In 2023/24 we have launched our 'Foster 4 York' recruitment campaign and updated our sufficiency strategy (due for launch in July 2024). Alongside this we have invested in improving our branding and created a dedicated, permanent marketing role to support this work.

We launched a comprehensive review of our fostering service. This will include reviewing the current structure, our systems and processes, existing additional and 'add-on' allowances, payments and the fee/skill matrix and training to ensure that all foster carers are well supported and rewarded fairly.

There is a national shortage of foster placements in the country and we are seeing a record number of foster carers leaving the sector. This places a great deal of pressure on all local authorities and independent fostering agencies in terms of recruitment and retention. We are therefore competing more now than ever in terms of attracting new foster carers to provide homes for children and young people in York.

The fostering review began in February 2024 and was discussed by the Corporate Parenting Board. The input from the board is helping to inform the review as it progresses. We expect to have completed the review by September 2024.

Our Corporate Parenting Strategy said that we would want to increase the number of children living in York local authority provision and that we would improve placement stability.



The first graph below shows how the percentage of children in care living in York local authority provision has changed in recent years. We can see this has increased to 67.49% in 2023/24. This is an encouraging direction of travel and we would want to see the fostering review and new sufficiency strategy help improve this in 2024/25 and beyond.

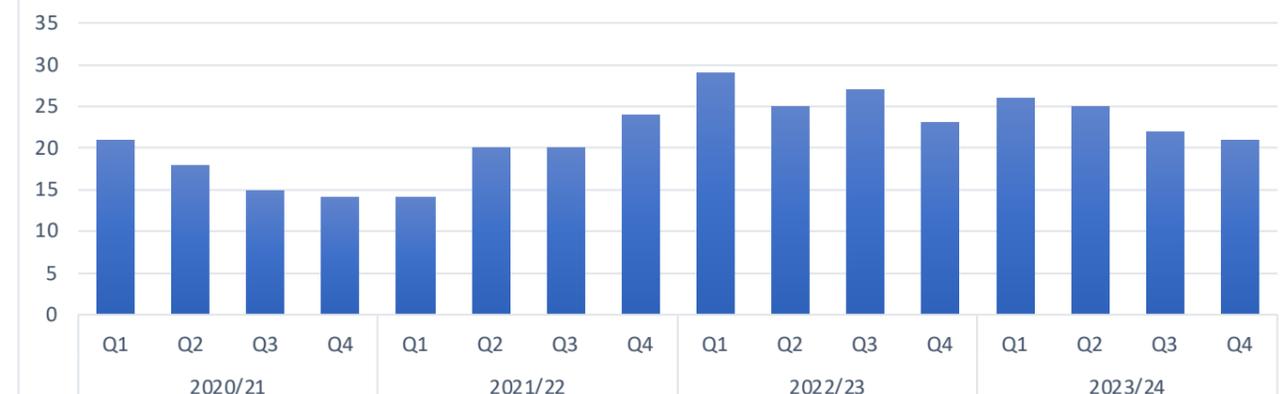
**% of children in care living in York local authority provision**



We have reviewed all children and young people through 'Making York Home' to ensure appropriate plans are in place and independent advocacy has been offered to all young people placed externally to the City. This has resulted in some children moving placement where it has been identified this is the right thing to do.

The chart below shows the number of children in care that have had three or more moves in the last 12 months. This is a common measure of placement stability. This shows that the number of children needing three or more moves had been increasing throughout 2020/21 peaking in the first quarter of 2022/23. Since then there has been a gradual decline in the number needing to make these moves telling us where children live is becoming more stable.

**Number of children in care with three or more moves in the last 12 months**



## Family and Friends

### What our strategy says:

We recognise how important relationships are in supporting young people to thrive and become independent. We will work hard to support you to keep in touch with family and friends and if this is not possible, we will help you to understand why.

We will prioritise the development of positive and stable relationships between children and young people in care and their support network.

### What Children and Young People tell us

The 2023 U Matter survey asked young people about relationships, family and friends.



### Building Brighter Futures

We have made real progress in our journey to implement our 'Building Brighter Futures' practice model. This reflects a significant investment by the council in developing consistently good practice.

Over the last 12 months practitioners, managers and leaders have been engaged in a carefully designed programme of training and support. This has allowed us to make great strides in implementing Signs of Safety and Family Seeing. In March 2024 we launched Signs of Belonging. Signs of Belonging is an approach dedicated to supporting young



people by helping them develop their networks. The goal is to maximise the chances of reuniting the child with their family or placing them in kinship care, ensuring they stay connected to their family, culture, and important relationships.

### Family Seeing and Family Time

In December 2023 we secured £297k of funding from the Department for Education to further develop our approach to Family Seeing and Family Time for children in care and care leavers. We have recruited a dedicated Family Seeing Coordinator who will undertake direct work with care experienced young people. Alongside this we are co-producing with young people a new approach to Family Time. The impact of these changes will be to support young people to see and develop the loving relationships they will need throughout their life. The funded project for Family Seeing and Family Time will conclude in March 2025. We will be able to report on this work in our next Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report.

### My Care Plans

We worked with children and young people to redevelop and relaunch 'My Care Plans'. These were rolled out in March 2023 for all children and young people in our care. My Care Plans are designed to help children and young people be actively involved in their plan, including family time and planning their future.

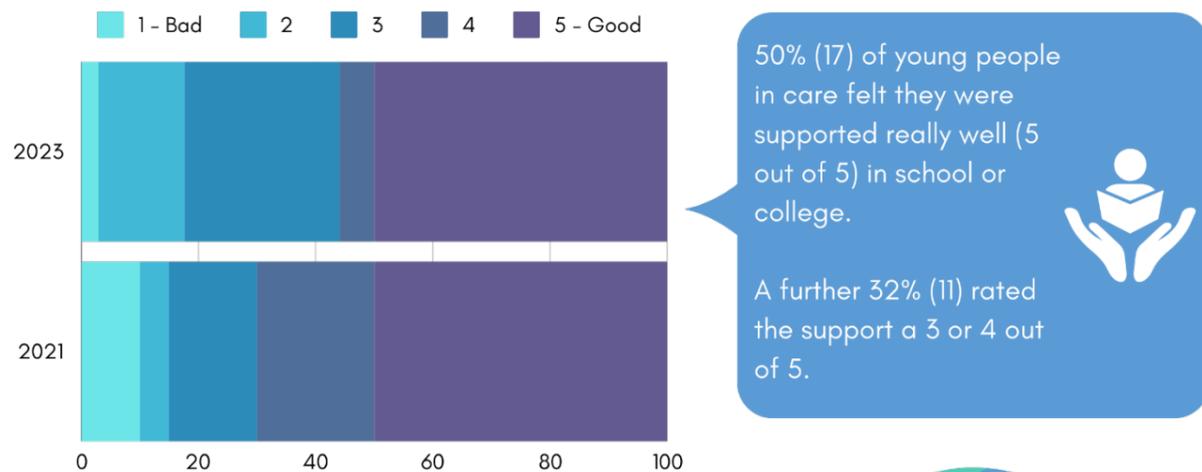
A dip sample has shown use that the quality of the plans reviewed was very good with some young people clearly sharing their goals for the future such as owning a private beach and a young child who dreamed of being in 'Paw Patrol'. The reasons they were in care was clearly explained and some lovely thoughts from teachers and carers helped make sense of what was happening. Our focus is now on embedding the revised My Care Plans into our ongoing reviews of children's plans.

## Education

### What our strategy says:

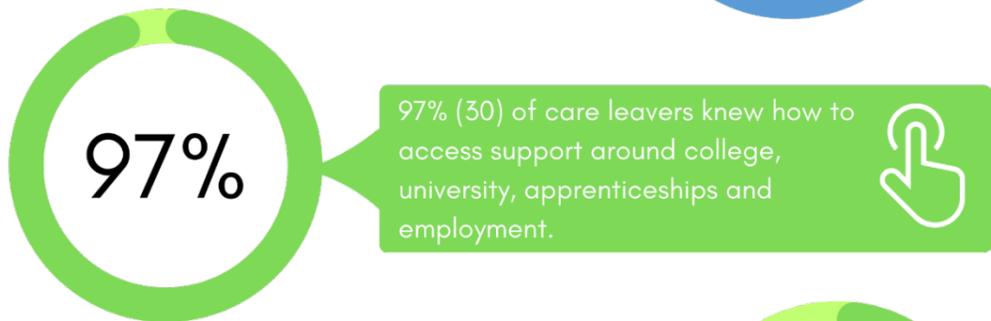
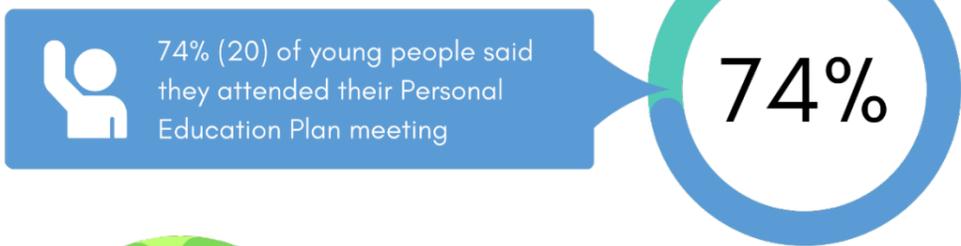
We will work to support young people engage with education that helps them to reach their potential. We want to make sure children and young people have a sense of 'belonging' in schools. We will also develop our approach to apprenticeships and access to employment so young people can realise their ambitions.

### What Children and Young People tell us



50% (17) of young people in care felt they were supported really well (5 out of 5) in school or college.

A further 32% (11) rated the support a 3 or 4 out of 5.



The virtual school supports and challenges settings, schools, colleges and other professionals to improve the education outcomes of children in care by striving to close the achievement gap through targeted support and intervention when needed. The Head of the Virtual School regularly attends the Corporate Parenting Board and following the visit of the National Advisor for Care leavers we are creating an Education focused sub-group.

The Corporate Parenting Board reviewed the Virtual School Annual Report in December 2023. Key points from the annual report were:

- The Virtual School held a celebration event for the Class of 2023 - inviting all young people who finished statutory school (Y11), or who had completed Level 3/A Level courses in Y12/3 and who graduated from university. This was the first time the Virtual School has held a celebration event and it will become an annual event going forward.
- There is an improving picture of stability in education with less children needing to change school. There were only 31 children of school age who moved at least once during the academic year 2022/23 which is a reduction compared to the previous year when 65 children moved.
- All children and young people in care have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) from age 2 until the age of 18 unless they are in employment; these are reviewed termly by settings, schools and colleges and during 2021-22 all were quality assured by the virtual school team to ensure consistent application of standards.
- The electronic PEP system enables the virtual school to monitor the completion and quality of PEPs and allows for systematic application, authorisation and monitoring of PP+ funding for individual pupils. All designated teachers and social workers have access to this system and can contribute to the PEP process. This process is used to challenge schools to support pupils' individual needs. All previous targets must be reviewed in terms of impact before further targets are set.
- The consistency of PEPS is achieved through the quality assurance process which is the responsibility of the Virtual School headteacher and PEP coordinator. They read every PEP each term and provide a quality assurance judgment summary and feedback to the setting/school.
- Attendance during 2022/23 rose to almost 90% overall and is a reflection of the impact of the PEP coordinator role who acts as attendance officer for the Virtual School, working closely with designated teachers and social workers. The Virtual School Head and Head of Corporate Parenting meet every month to review support needs of any children with a pattern of declining attendance.
- Reducing fixed term suspensions remains a key priority for the virtual school in York. The virtual school Specialist Inclusion and Wellbeing Adviser and the Deputy Head of

the Virtual School meet weekly to discuss responses to schools and provide bespoke advice and intervention.

Raising attainment and improving the life chances of children in care is the most important priority of any virtual school.

- **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** - Outcomes in 2023 shows that children at the end of the EYFS in York did better overall than children in care regionally and nationally. There were 8 children in the cohort in 2023 who had been in care for at least 12 months - 50% reached GLD (Good Level of Development) within the early years foundation stage profile.
- **Key Stage One** - Outcomes at KS1 improved on 2022, particularly in the Year One Phonics Screening check where 86% of the cohort met the standard. This is higher than the overall York average of 80% and compares to 65% regionally and nationally 61%. At the end of Year Two, 44% of the cohort achieved the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths combined. Both these measures are better than regional (33%) and national (31%) data for children in care.
- **Key Stage Two** - Both attainment and progress at KS2 are improving however this is still a priority for the city. Results were better than in 2022.
  - o **York** – Reading: 31%, Writing: 56%, Maths: 56%.
  - o **Regionally** – Reading: 52%, Writing: 50%, Maths: 51%
  - o **Nationally** – Reading: 52%, Writing: 43%, Maths: 45%
- **Key Stage Four** – The overall attainment 8 score for the cohort was 27.9 which is higher than regional (23.6) and national (24.8). City of York attainment 8 score for all pupils was 49.2. The virtual school will be commissioning the support of a progress leader (independent provider) to add capacity to our team 45 days over the 2023/24 academic year focussing on improving outcomes in KS4 by responding to data from the PEP reviews and proactively maintaining contact with secondary school designated teachers in between PEPs.

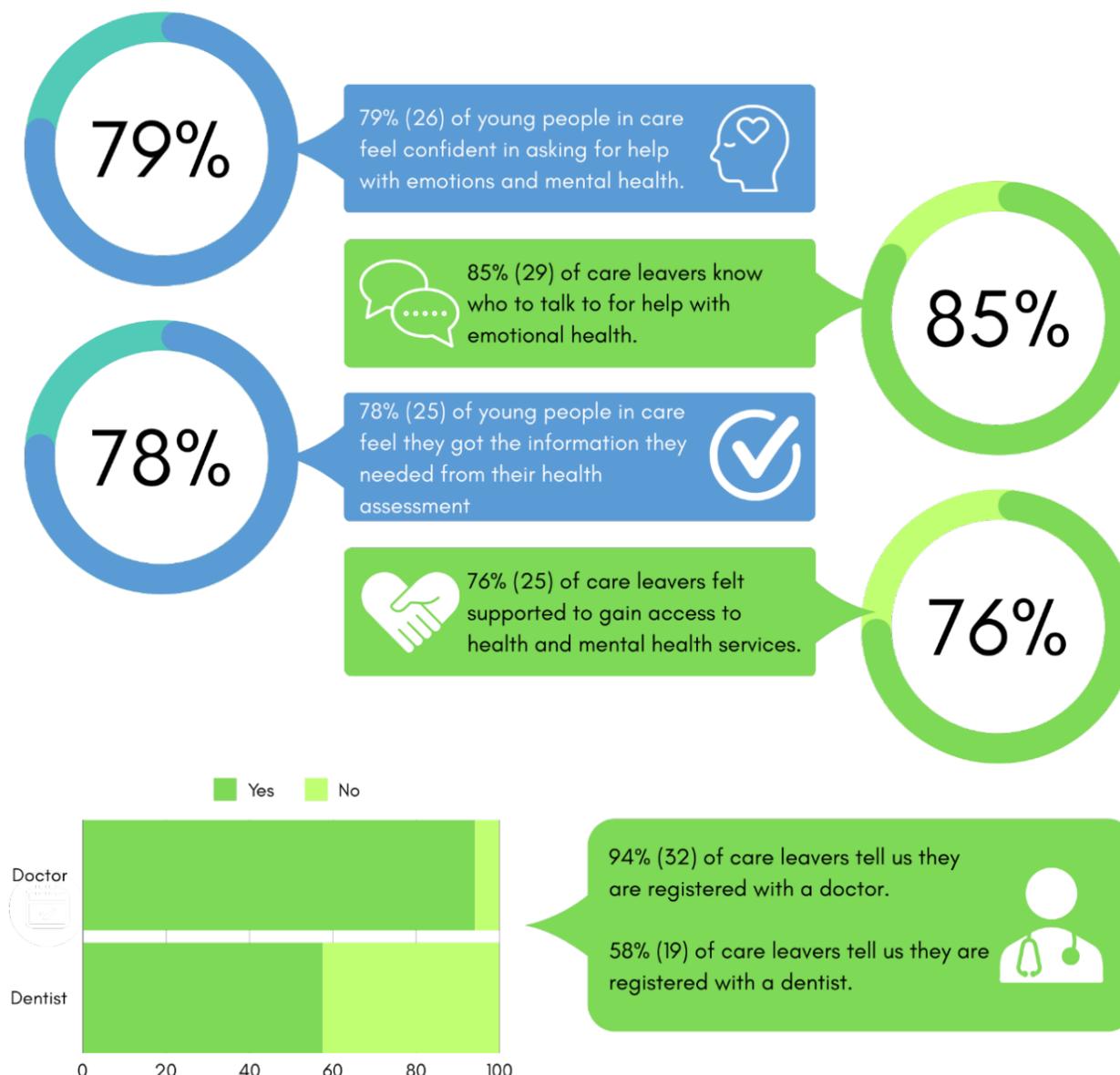
The Corporate Parenting Board received a report outlining proposals to improve the support for care-experienced young people to identify, apply for and take up apprenticeship opportunities. These proposals will now be developed towards implementation in 2024/25.

## Health

### What our strategy says:

We will work in partnership with health to ensure that the health needs of children and young people in our care are prioritised and met. We will do our best to ensure children have access to appropriate support in relation to their well-being and mental health.

### What Children and Young People tell us



Partners from Health are now regular members of the Corporate Parenting Board. Following the visit from the National Advisor for Care Leavers we are creating a sub-group focussed on health. There are regular meetings with health colleagues including the Head of Healthy Child Service and the Designated Safeguarding Nurse where performance and practice improvements are monitored and discussed.

The Corporate Parenting Board had a thematic focus on health in March 2024. During this session care experienced young people, elected members and senior leaders from the local authority and health scrutinised performance and plans for improvement.

### Health Assessments and Dental

In 2022/23 only 11% of Initial Health Assessments were completed on time. To improve this we have streamlined the process and introduced weekly oversight as well as monthly and quarterly reporting of performance. We have seen performance improve over the course of 2023/24 and in Quarter 4 29% of Initial Health Assessments were completed on time. Whilst we are encouraged by the improvement we want to consistently see better performance and this will remain a focus of the Corporate Parenting Board.

Performance in stronger for Review Health Assessments (88.8% Q4 2023/24, 100% for under 5's) and up to date dental checks was very strong at (94.9% Q4 2023/24).

### Together WE Can

As mentioned earlier the Together, WE Can team includes a Clinical Psychologist – young people supported us in the recruitment of this role. We hope to begin to see the impact of having this specialist resource in place throughout 2024/25.

Alongside the Clinical Psychologist capacity within Together WE Can we have also established a consultant psychologist to work right across the service. Employed by our local CAMHS provider (Tees, Esk and Weir Valley) but dedicated to working across children's services the role will focus on formulation, trauma informed practice, supporting teams, practice supervision and specialist support to foster carers understanding and addressing trauma.

### Staying Close and well-being

In April we secured funding from the Department for Education to develop our offer to young people leaving residential care. This funding enabled us to create a 'Staying Close' offer to better support, equip and sustain young people leaving residential children's homes into independence. Within the Staying Close team is a Wellbeing and Network Coordinator. Their role is to ensure that young people continue to have access to essential healthcare networks and support them to develop sustaining networks of support.

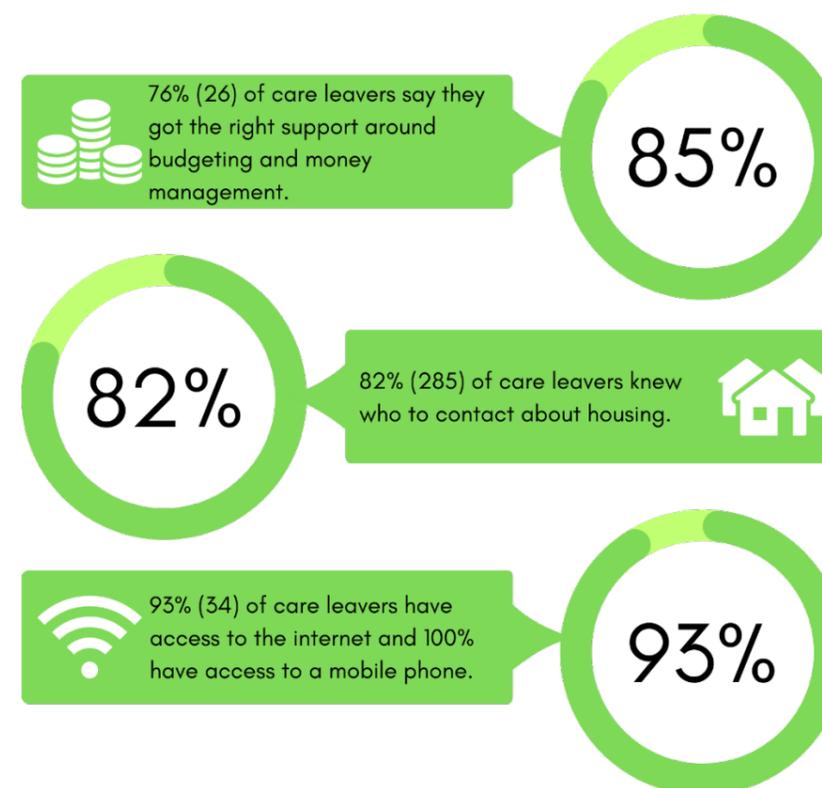
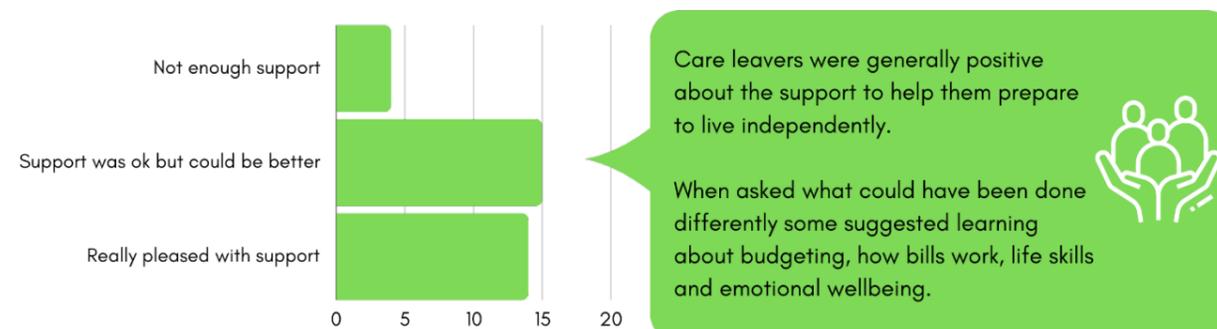
## Support into adulthood and independence

### What our strategy says

We will support care-experienced young people prepare for independence, developing essential skills, and nurturing meaningful relationships to empower them in their journey towards a successful and fulfilling life.

### What children and young people tell us

Our young people are consistently telling us that the impact of the cost of living crisis has heightened and contributed to the deterioration of their emotional wellbeing. In every consultation and the most recent survey emotional wellbeing has been in the top three priorities.



## Ofsted Focused Visit

In August 2023 Ofsted undertook a focused visit looking at arrangements for care leavers<sup>1</sup>. We were really encouraged by the positive feedback given by Ofsted following their visit:

*'Care leavers are very well supported by staff, with whom they have stable and trusted relationships. They are supported effectively into adulthood by workers who are emotionally invested in them. Care leavers are involved from an early stage in the decisions which affect them. They are helped to understand their rights and entitlements. Those who wish to become involved in service and practice developments are actively encouraged to do so.'*

*Senior leaders have created a culture across the council in which care leavers are valued and are given a high priority status. Senior leaders and members are strong and active corporate parents, who are committed to improving the lives of care leavers. Leaders value opportunities to engage with young people and understand their views and perspectives, treating them as experts. This puts young people at the centre of decision-making and service development.'*

In particular Ofsted noted the feedback they heard from young people about their experience of being supported into independence and changes at the Corporate Parenting Board meaning they feel more listened to. The full focused visit report and a plan of action to improve further was shared with the Corporate Parenting Board.

## Offer for care leavers

In September 2023 the Corporate Parenting Board provided feedback on the development of an updated offer for care leavers. Work took place in 2023 to consult and co-produce this new offer with our care experienced young people. Key features of the new offer are:

- A new approach to our local offer, moving away from a one size fits all to a more individualised approach especially for relevant and former relevant care experienced young people 16 to 25.
- Improved staying in touch communication with all care experienced young people 21+ by sending birthday and Christmas cards which includes key information around support offer & contact details.
- Being clearer about the offer to qualifying care leavers including access to the setting up home grant for essential items.
- Relaunching the peer mentor scheme.
- Promoting the MIND Counselling offer 16 to 25 which offers 6 free sessions for care leavers who live in or out of the City who are not in higher education.

- A new financial offer for relevant and former relevant care experienced young people 21 to 25 administered on an individual assessed need basis.
- Bus pass and out of area council tax for care experienced young people up to 21 who live permanently outside of the City.
- An improved offer around Council tax exemption for care experienced young people who live in the City up to 21- to exempt on a sliding scale over 3 years.
- A £25 contribution per month for 1 year towards broadband costs when moving into independence up to 21.
- Providing access to a wellbeing app in response to input from young people.
- Updating our offer for young people attending university.

## Feedback from the National Adviser for Care Leavers

In December 2023 we welcomed Mark Riddell as the National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers for a two day formal visit. Feedback from the visit recognised the progress that had been made in recent years – 'I was very impressed by the leadership and management approach that was ambitious, aspirational and I got a real sense of passion and commitment to have a better offer for care leavers across the whole service area. It was clear to see real signs of change such as a housing protocol, opportunity broker, a more stable workforce, an EET figure of 68%, a review of the local offer, a strong user voice, a no wrong door approach (Together WE Can) is being developed and a strengthening of your apprenticeship offer to mention just a few.'

Following the visit we have taken further steps reflecting on feedback provided:

- We have broadened the membership of the Corporate Parenting Board to include key partners in Health and the Department for Work and Pensions. In 2024 we will also begin to pilot subgroups of the Corporate Parenting Board focused on Employment, Housing and Education.
- We have successfully recruited an 'opportunity broker' who will work across the council and partners to develop a Workforce Strategy that gives opportunities to care experienced children and young people.
- We have updated the housing protocol so that all accommodation now has carpet and white goods and has been decorated before a young person moves in. A one-page document for young people to explain the housing protocol has been developed.
- We are developing a protocol that will help identify care leavers who would benefit from an Independent Reviewing Officer reviewing their pathway plan.
- Our SingleView system has been updated so that key council departments can easily identify where someone has care leaver status and ensure they are supported in line with expectations as corporate parents.

<sup>1</sup> Ofsted Focused Visit report 50227341 (ofsted.gov.uk)



- Young people are refreshing guidance and resources for professionals on using clear and accessible language. Young people spoke about the importance of language at our first workforce celebration event in 2024.

### Employment and Opportunities Broker

As mentioned before we created a new role of Employment and Opportunities Broker as part our Staying Close model. The purpose of the role is to provide intensive support to young people leaving care and into independence by focusing on employment and training. It is an active, front facing role going into the community and engaging local businesses in York. We are really encouraged by the initial engagement from local businesses and will look to grow the impact of this role in the next 12 months.

The Corporate Parenting Board has considered a number of updates and proposals to support care experienced young people be ready for adulthood and independence. This includes an update on the work and support offer from the Department for Work and Pensions.

### Support with the cost of living

In 2023/24 the Corporate Parenting Board supported the creation of a dedicated support fund for care experienced young people impacted by the cost of living. This was as a direct result of listening to the experienced of young people. A e-voucher scheme was developed and managed by the Pathway Service. Our young people told us that they wanted to reduce the barriers to applying for support without having to supply countless documents and information to evidence their need. As a result, we have kept the application process very simple. This is a strengths based conversation with a member of the Pathway Team to identify the area of need.

These vouchers could support with key costs around fuel, food, essentials and in exceptional circumstances emergency cash payments. The Corporate Parenting Board has been updated on the scheme and its use in 2023/24.

- In the first year of the scheme From April 2023 – March 2024 we supported our care leavers with 282 vouchers.
- This equated to £15,711 worth of support for over 60 individuals.
- 256 vouchers were used to support our young people with supermarket vouchers.
- 11 vouchers were used to support our young people with emergency cash payments.
- 9 vouchers were used to support with clothing and home items.
- 6 vouchers were used to support energy costs.

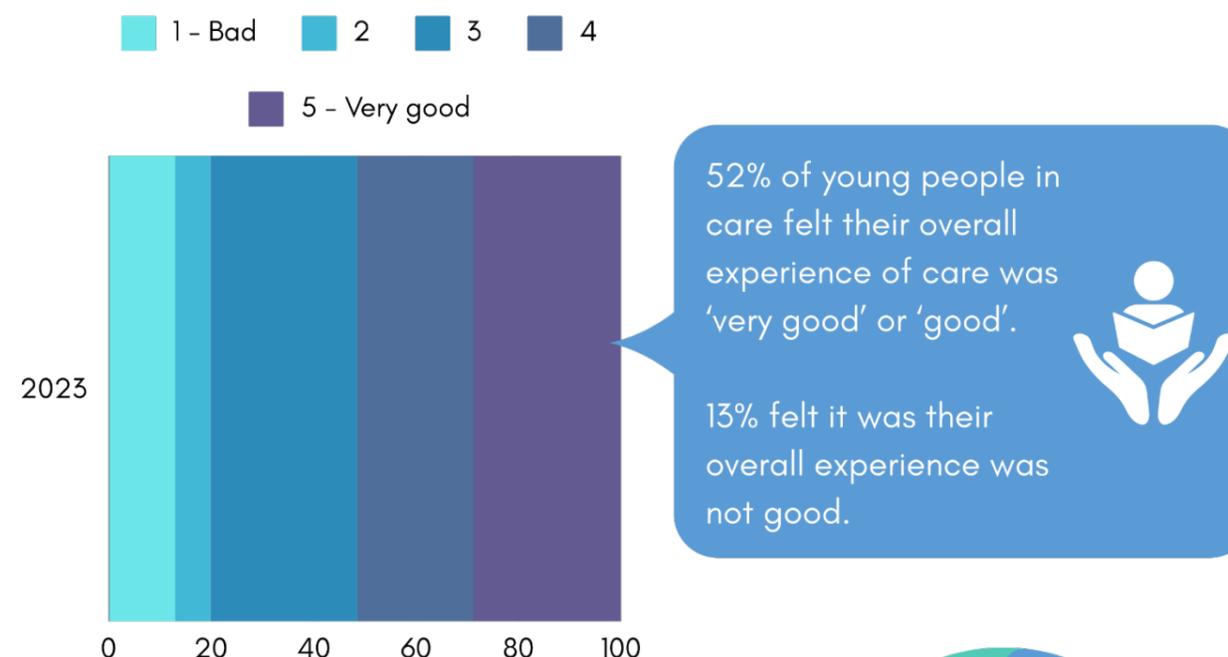
The voucher scheme is currently in place until the end of March 2025. It will be reviewed in 2024/25 alongside our wider support for care experienced young people to develop financial independence and well-being.

## Good corporate parents

### What our strategy says

Everyone will play their part in being a good corporate parent by actively fostering a nurturing and inclusive environment that empowers care-experienced young individuals to thrive. Our Children and Young People have a voice in the way we deliver our services and we will act upon what they tell us.

### What children and young people tell us



The Corporate Parenting Board is committed to ensuring the best possible outcomes for children in care and care leavers. The Corporate Parenting Board agreed a new Corporate Parenting Strategy that was launched in February 2024<sup>2</sup>. We have made great strides in recent years to develop our approach to Corporate Parenting including:

- The Corporate Parenting Board is now co-chaired by care experienced young people and elected members.
- The membership of the Corporate Parenting Board has been extended to include key partners in health, housing and the Department for Work and Pensions.
- We have secured permanent funding to support our successful model of Corporate Parenting Advisors.
- The Corporate Parenting Board has received updates directly reflecting priorities and feedback from young people. In 2023/24 these covered; protected characteristics, the local offer for care leavers and ‘Our Place’ (an ambition to create a dedicated space and support for care experienced young people).
- We are introducing three sub-groups of the Corporate Parenting Board to ensure a greater focus on health, housing and education.

There is a strong commitment right across the council to our responsibility as corporate parents. In 2024 the job descriptions of all Chief Officers across the council were updated to directly reference their responsibilities as a corporate parent. There is an ambition to go further and include this expectation in other roles right across the council.

Working together with care experienced young people we have carefully explored all options around making care experience a protected characteristic. We know that a number of local authorities have already agreed proposals to make care experience a protected characteristic with varying degrees of impact. Our work with young people has been clear that whatever our approach is it must be meaningful and not tokenistic. We’ve also taken time to explore together any potential negative consequences of making care experience a protected characteristic. This is an example of the Corporate Parenting Board working deliberately, over time, with young people to come to the right decision. In 2024/25 we will be taking forward through the council, and encouraging partners, to make care experience a protected characteristic. We look forward to being able to update on our progress with this priority in our next annual report.

As well as young people co-chairing the Corporate Parenting Board we know we have good opportunities for children and young people to share their views and help us design services. Show Me That I Matter and I Still Matter are the groups that make up York’s Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum. In addition we work together with young people to support specific projects, training, recruitment, regional events, national

<sup>2</sup> [Corporate Parenting Strategy 2024-2027 Annex A Corporate Parenting Strategy.pdf \(york.gov.uk\)](#)

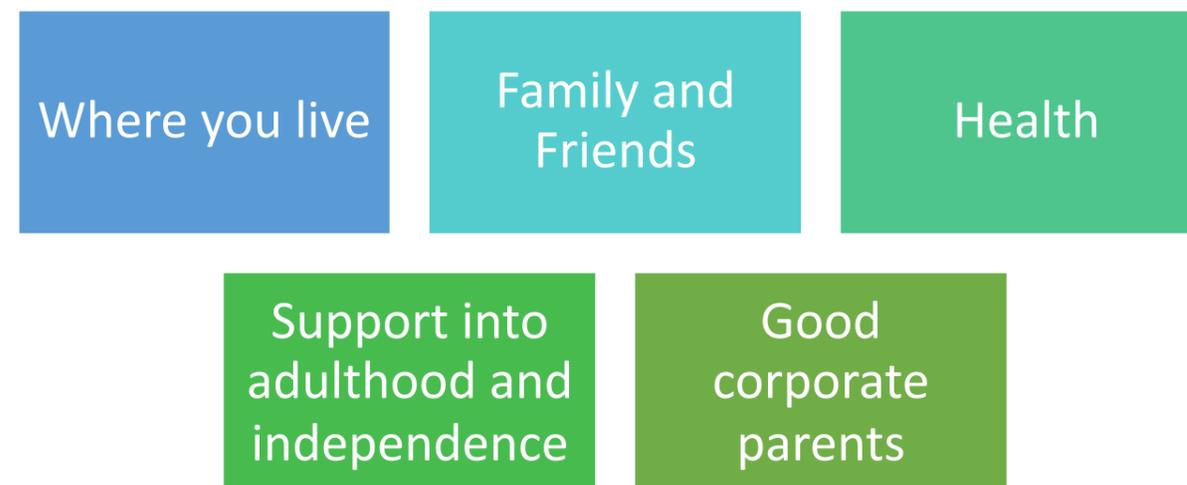
events and our now regular programme of celebration events. In 2023/24 over 50 care experienced young people have been supported to share their views through these forums.

Last year we introduced our new All Together Active group for care experienced young people that want more active and social activities. This is working as a great tool to introduce more young people into other participation groups. Below is a summary of some of the key themes we have been able to support young people to be involved in:

- The advisory group for mental health.
- Working with the fostering team on foster carer recruitment and training.
- Sharing experiences of having an Independent Visitor.
- Developing our approach to Protected Characteristics.
- Building on the work to further improve the joint housing protocol for care leavers.
- Input into the leaving care offer.
- The co-production of ‘Project Wenlock’ – our new residential offer for children and young people.
- Supported young people to share their views around the importance of language in sessions with all children’s services staff and the safeguarding partnership.

## ■ Looking to the future

Our Corporate Parenting Strategy and the views and experiences of young people will continue to be what drives our work. This annual report shows the real benefits of meaningfully working together with young people to be the best corporate parent we can be. In 2024/25 we will focus in particular how we can bring more partners to the table so we can deliver against our priorities as corporate parents:



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我們也用您們的語言提供這個信息 (Cantonese)

এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় দেয়া যেতে পারে। (Bengali)

Ta informacja może być dostarczona w twoim własnym języku. (Polish)

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde almanız mümkündür. (Turkish)

یہ معلومات آپ کی اپنی زبان (بولی) میں بھی مہیا کی جاسکتی ہیں۔ (Urdu)

Publication date: November 2024

For further information: West Offices, Station Rise, York YO1 6GA

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# Corporate Parenting Strategy

2024-2027



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## ■ Introduction

The Corporate Parenting Strategy for the City of York outlines our ambitions for children and young people who are looked after by us, the local authority, as their corporate parents. The strategy also sets out our long-term aspirations for care experienced young people as they become adults.

We recognise that the best outcomes for children and young people are achieved when they can live safely within their own families. This fundamental principle underpins our mission to implement the “Building Better Futures” practice model, which incorporates Signs of Safety and Family Seeing. By adopting a Family Seeing approach, we aim to change the way we support vulnerable children and young people.

The benefits of Family Seeing is how it supports reconnecting children and young people with their extended families and networks, fostering a sense of belonging and continuity that is vital for their well-being. Family Seeing promotes partnership with families and networks, which leads to more sustainable and successful outcomes. Lastly, the Family Seeing approach aligns perfectly with our core values of empowerment, inclusivity, and holistic support, as it recognises that strong families, networks, and relationships serve as the cornerstone for a brighter and more stable future for our children and young people. Through this approach, we are not only investing in the welfare of the children but also in the strength and resilience of families and networks, truly building better futures for all involved.

Written in partnership with care-experienced young people, their carers, and professionals, this strategy provides a holistic, inclusive and ambitious long term plan for a city that cares.



## ■ Foreword

### **Annie, Cody and Abbie – ‘Show Me That I Matter’ and ‘I Still Matter’**

Members of York’s Children in care council and care leavers forum have a well-established involvement with the corporate parenting board and understand that their role as corporate parents is to support and enhance the opportunities for looked after children and care leavers. Both Show Me That I Matter (York’s Children in Care Council) and I Still Matter (York’s Care Leavers Forum) members meet monthly to discuss and raise suggestions of how the support for care experienced young people can continuously improve, with their own experiences being an influence for positive change.

As young people we find opportunities like the ‘Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum’ (CICC & CLF) a good opportunity to have our voices heard, which are then fed into the Corporate Parenting Board. Members of the groups feel that the Corporate Parenting Strategy outlines a clear and innovative approach to achieving the most positive journey into adulthood for all looked after young people. Support around building and maintaining relationships, as well as working together as an integrative team, is a key element of the proposed strategy, that care experienced people feel will reflect best on how to successfully support young people.

Members of the CICC & CLF feel it is vital for any professionals working with care experienced young people to be mindful of treating each young person as their own individual and support them to excel in their own lives, as they create their unique path in life. The chairs of both groups think it is of high importance for professionals to be held accountable for what they say they will do and to stand by the statement of ‘treat me like you would your own child’.

### **Cllr. Bob Webb - Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education**

As a City of York Councillor and a Corporate Parent our first responsibility must always be to the children and young people in our care. This is, of course, a responsibility but also a privilege. I am really proud to lead by example on this as the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education as well as the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board.

The role of a Corporate Parent should obviously be about the safety of the child, but it should be much more than that; it should be about hearing a young person’s voice and listening and acting on what is said; it should be about doing all we can to strengthen families to support each other and it should be about providing support at the right time to make positive change to a child’s life.

This strategy lays out the detail of how we can work together with our partners, with our communities and importantly with our families and the young people themselves to make these positive changes.



## **Martin Kelly – Corporate Director for Children’s Services**

As a longstanding resident of this beautiful city, I am passionate about all young people in York getting the very best start in life. It is therefore an extreme privilege to share the role of corporate parent, working with and alongside parents and guardians to provide the best care and support for looked after children, young people, and care leavers. I am committed long term to create an environment where young people are respected, feel listened to, are valued, and feel a deep sense trust, love and belonging.

We have a shared commitment in York to think about every young person’s long-term future, not just working in the moment. Our practice model is designed to help us think deeply about building the right foundations using friends, networks and opportunities which empower and build long term resilience.

Our Corporate Parenting Strategy builds on the things that matter to young people and provides a framework to hold our system to account in delivering ambitious, hopeful, and meaningful outcomes. It is my commitment that we will always seek to ask, ‘Is it good enough for my child?’



## ■ What does it mean to be ‘in care’ or ‘care experienced’?

Below are formal definitions of what it means to be ‘in care’ or ‘care experienced’.

**Children and Young People in Care:** These are young people who are in the care and supervision of the local authority, residing in foster care, residential care, or other care arrangements. They receive support and guidance from the local authority to ensure their well-being and development.

**Care Experienced Young People:** These are individuals who have previously been in the care system, including those who may still receive support from the local authority or are transitioning into independent living.

Everyone’s personal experience of what being in care meant to them will be unique. Below is a summary of what children and young people have said being in care or care experienced means to them.

*Even if things have been really difficult at home, it is likely that you will feel really sad and unsettled leaving your family and the familiarity of the place you lived. Coming into the care of the local authority is a new beginning for any young person – it can feel like life starting all over again, meeting a new family, living somewhere completely different, potentially even having to move schools. It can sometimes feel like you have to grow up at a much younger age than other children and get used to being involved in lots of decisions about yourself. Going into foster care can be an anxiety provoking and confusing time, especially with meetings and check ins from professionals and other people now involved in your life. As time goes on, and the more settled you become, you can gradually begin to find your feet and adapt to this new life.*

*Even if things have been difficult at home before you came into care, you have mixed emotions about not living with your biological family. It can be a big adjustment, and especially difficult if your siblings are going to be living with different carers. Having to move outside of the area you grew up in can make you feel isolated and if contact with family members isn’t supported then you can feel cut off. Life can feel out of control and settling in with new carers can take some time.*

*Once you are in a settled in your placement things can get a whole lot better. In the right placement you can feel loved and cared for and part of a family, perhaps for the first time. Having your own room can give you the space you need, and it can be fun having other young people to live with. Having lots of key workers may sometimes feel overwhelming, but you also have their support, and it’s comforting to know there are always people there for you. Being in care doesn’t mean you are loved any less. You now have extended an family who all want what’s best for you.*

*Children who have experienced being in care sometimes feel judged by their peers, by key workers and by society at large. This is the reason that York’s Children in Care Council and Care leavers Forum have welcomed the recommendation in the 2023 Independent Care Review on Protected Characteristics, which backs this position up, stating:*

*“Many care experienced people face discrimination, stigma, and prejudice in their day to day lives. Public perceptions of care experience centre on the idea that children are irredeemably damaged and that can lead to discrimination and assumptions being made.”*

*There are sometimes new opportunities open to young people who have been in care, but you need to be told about them and be supported to find the confidence to apply for those opportunities. In York young people are currently campaigning for care experience to be a protected characteristic, to open up more opportunities and to challenge discrimination.*

## ■ Corporate Parenting Principles

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 lays out seven Corporate Parenting Principles to ensure the best possible outcomes for Children in Care and Care Leavers. As our children grow into adulthood, we uphold these principles to provide our care leavers with the support and stability they need, just like any child would expect when preparing to leave home.

- To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of children and young people.
- To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
- To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people.
- To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.
- To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people.
- For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work.
- To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

## ■ Stable Homes Built on Love

The Stable Homes Built on Love review was published in 2022 and sets out a vision for reform of the children's social care system in England. The review's makes a number of recommendations. Key recommendations include:

- **Reforming the experience of being in care:** The review found that the experience of being in care can be very different for different children, and that some children do not receive the care and support they need. The review recommends a "corporate parenting" approach extended to partners not just the local authority.
- **Providing more support for kinship carers and wider family networks:** The review found that kinship carers often do not receive the support they need, and that this can

have a negative impact on the children they care for. The review recommends that local authorities provide more assistance, practical support, and emotional support to kinship carers.

- **Supporting the workforce:** The review found that the workforce in children's social care is under pressure, and that this can impact the quality of care that children receive. The review recommends more training and resources for the workforce.
- **Delivering system reform:** The review found that the children's social care system is fragmented. The review recommends that local authorities work together to deliver system reform, and that they make better use of technology.

The review's implementation is still ongoing, and it is too early to say what the full outcome will be. The review provides a valuable opportunity to reflect on the current state of children's social care and to make positive changes for the future. We will need to adapt our implementation of our Corporate Parenting Strategy to take the opportunities created by the review as it begins to become more fully formed.

## ■ **UMatter – What children and young people tell us about their care experience**

The U Matter Survey is a chance for children and young people in care and care leavers aged 11 + to have their say about their care experience. The survey is carried out every two years and made available to young people over a three-month period. Below is a of summary messages from children and young people gathered through the 2023 U Matter Survey. Responses were received from 80 care experienced young people.

### Children in Care

#### Where I live

- The majority of young people feel safe where they are living (95%)
- The majority of young people feel happy where they are living (86%)
- The majority of young people say the adults they live with notice how they are feeling (85%)

#### My Social Worker

- The majority of young people felt that their Social Worker listens to them (91%)
- Of the young people who have had a change of Social Worker in the last 12 months 52% were unhappy with how this was done
- The majority of young people knew how to contact their Social Worker (87%)
- Just over three quarters of young people had a good understanding about the decisions made about them and their family (79%)

## Reviews

- 79% of young people who responded knew who their IRO was
- Just over half of young people who responded said they were able to speak to their IRO before review meetings (52%)
- 49% of young people said they routinely attend their review meetings

## Health

- 86% of young people know what a Health Assessment is
- Most young people who said they had attended their health assessment found it useful (71%)
- Just over three quarters of young people felt confident in asking for help with their emotions and mental health (79%)

## Education

- 52% of young people said they have a copy of their personal education plan
- 70% of young people said they contributed to their Personal Education Plan
- 74% of young people said they attended their Personal Education Plan meeting
- The majority of young people report that their Personal Education Plan (meeting) was useful (81%).

## Relationships

- 100% of young people said they had someone in their life who they trust and who helps them when they need them
- 100% of young people knew who to speak to if they were unhappy about arrangements for seeing their family
- Most young people felt they had had the right support to keep in touch with family and friends (84%)

## Rights and entitlements

- Just over three quarters of young people said someone had talked to them about having an Advocate (79%)
- The majority of young people said someone had talked to them about having an Independent Visitor (82%)
- 79% of young people know they have a right to make a complaint if they are unhappy about the service they have received from the Local Authority

## Care Leavers

### Where I live

- The majority of care leavers feel safe where they are living (92%)
- The majority of care leavers feel happy where they are living (86%)
- The majority of care leavers felt their needs and views were considered when exploring their housing options (91%)
- The majority of care leavers have access to the internet (94%)

### Pathway Worker

- The majority of care leavers reported that they had a good / very good relationship with their Pathway Worker (75%)
- The majority of care leavers said that their worker did what they said they would (94%)
- 100% of care leavers knew how to contact their pathway worker
- The majority of care leavers said that their worker listened to them (86%)
- Pathway Plan and Preparing for Independence
- The majority of care leavers felt involved in their pathway planning (91%)
- Over half of care leavers reported that they consulted their Pathway Plan for information, and it was important to them (65%)
- The majority of care leavers felt they were able to discuss their goals and aspirations (90%)

### Health

- The majority of care leavers know who to talk to if they needed support for their emotional health (85%) and would feel comfortable asking adults around them for support to gain information or to access health services (76%).
- Only 58% of care leavers are registered with a dentist (80%)
- The majority of care leavers are registered with a GP (94%)

### Relationships

- The majority of care leavers report to have someone in their life who they trust and helps them when needed (97%)
- 79% of care leavers felt they had support to keep in touch with the people that are important to them in their life's
- The majority of care leavers report to have a good social network that they can rely on (85%)

## Education

- The majority of care leavers are aware of the support available to access Education, Training and Employment and report to have received the right amount of support (97%)
- The majority of care leavers felt they had had the opportunity to discuss their education, training and employment options (90%)

## Local Offer

- 69% of care leavers report that they are aware of the Local Offer and are aware of their leaving care entitlements.
- Only 54% of care leavers know how to access the Local Offer
- 100% of care leavers know about the support available to them from the Children's Rights Service and all Care Leavers said a worker had spoken to them about advocacy.
- 94% of care leavers know that they have a right to make a complaint if they are unhappy about the service they receive.

## York's Guarantee for children and young people in care

The Guarantee is York's Pledge to children and young people in care. It has been created by young people in care and it says how the council should support you when you are in care. When we say 'council', this means any workers that work for the council such as your social worker, independent reviewing officer, advocate, managers, directors and more.

### Where you live

We will find you carers who will get to know you and help you feel safe, comfortable and cared for. We will listen to you so we can find you the right place to live.

### Family and friends

We will support you to keep in touch with family and friends and if this is not possible, we will help you to understand why.

### Education

We will help you to identify a teacher in school who you feel you can talk to and can attend your reviews. We will work together to develop a Personal Education Plan (PEP) which works for you and ensures you have the right support to do well. We will support and guide you to make the best choices after school to help you achieve your goals.

### Your review

Your review is all about you, therefore, it is really important that everyone knows your views. You will have the opportunity to talk to your Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) before your review whose role it is to make sure this happens. They will talk to you about

how you want your review to take place and can support you to chair your review if you wish.

### **Your social worker**

Your social worker will get to know you, listen to you and involve you in decisions which affect your life. This will help to create a care plan that is right for you. We will make sure you can contact your social worker, or a member of their team, so that you can get a response when you really need it.

### **Health**

We will make sure that you have the chance to talk about your health and emotional wellbeing and that you've got all the information and advice you may need.

### **Support until you're an adult**

To help you feel more prepared for your future, your social worker will work with you when you turn 16 to help you develop your pathway to independence. Once you turn 18 your pathway plan will identify the support available to you up until you are 25, if you need it.

## **■ The Corporate Parenting Board**

The Corporate Parenting Board in York serves as the strategic partnership responsible for overseeing and driving efforts to ensure the best possible outcomes for children in the care of the local authority, as well as care leavers. The board consists of elected members, key service leaders, council officers, care experienced young people and their representatives. It plays a leadership role by advocating for the unique needs of children and young people with care experience. The board ensures a coordinated approach across different services and agencies, maximizing the resources available to support successful outcomes for children and care leavers.

The Corporate Parenting Board will regularly take strategic ownership of this strategy and the action plan to implement it.



## ■ Our Strategic Priorities

Our strategic priorities reflect the corporate parenting principles, our strategic foundations and our guarantee to children and young people in care.

### 1) Where you live

We will do our best to find you carers who will get to know you and help you feel safe, comfortable and cared for. We will listen to you so we can try to find you the right place to live.

We recognise the need to develop our Sufficiency Strategy so that there are more options for where children and young people in care can live.

#### We will do this by:

- Updating our sufficiency strategy to ensure we have a range of placement options available to meet need.
- Continue the work of Make York Home to ensure children and young people are in placements that best meet their needs and support more young people to live in York near to the networks and relationships that matter most.
- Deliver on our Fostering recruitment plan to recruit more foster carers locally.
- Developing our approach locally to build an enhanced approach to residential care that works in an integrated way with local fostering provision.

#### What does success look like?

- More children live in York provision.
- Ensure children have placement stability.
- More young people tell us that where they live is right for them.

### 2) Family and Friends

We recognise how important relationships are in supporting young people to thrive and become independent. We will work hard to support you to keep in touch with family and friends and if this is not possible, we will help you to understand why.

We will prioritise the development of positive and stable relationships between children and young people in care and their support network.

#### We will do this by:

- Implementing our Family Seeing approach and supporting children and young people to develop the positive relationships and networks they need to thrive and sustain them throughout their life.
- Continuing to develop our Life Story work so that children can understand what is happening and why.

- Ensure 'My Care Plans' identify who is important to children and young people and how they are able to keep in touch.
- We will develop our model of family time to make better use of family networks and develop new ways of keeping in touch.
- We will implement our Building Better Futures practice model and the use of Family Seeing to help develop positive relationships in children's support network.

#### **What does success look like?**

- Children and young people tell us they understand their life story and are able to keep in touch with people that matter.
- Improved take up and feedback on the use of family time.

### **3) Education**

We will work to support young people engage with education that helps them to reach their potential. We want to make sure children and young people have a sense of 'belonging' in schools. We will also develop our approach to apprenticeships and access to employment so young people can realise their ambitions.

#### **We will do this by:**

- We will work to ensure Personal Education Plans (PEP) are good quality, aspirational and ambitious.
- We will work with all partners to ensure young people have the right support to be in school and to succeed.
- We will support and young people to plan for their future after school to help achieve their goals.
- As a corporate parent we will develop our approach to apprenticeships to help care experienced young people have another route to gaining experience and qualifications to help them in their career.
- We will have high expectations of partners in the city to improve their offer of support for care experienced young people to have access to apprenticeships and employment opportunities.

#### **What does success look like?**

- Children tell us that their PEPs are meaningful and reflect their aspirations.
- Our Quality Assurance tells us the quality of PEPs is consistently good.
- We know that children and young people have a sense of 'belonging' in schools and have a positive experience of education.
- Our data tells us that children and young people are attending and engaged with their education.

- We know care experienced people are in education, employment or training.
- We know young people are accessing apprenticeships and education through the local authority and partners.

#### **4) Health**

We will work in partnership with health to ensure that the health needs of children and young people in our care are prioritised and met. We will do our best to ensure children have access to appropriate support in relation to their well-being and mental health.

##### **We will do this by:**

- Improve time timeliness of Initial and Review Health Assessments.
- Work with partners in health to maximise access to dentistry and regular check ups.
- Improving support for children and young people's well-being through the development of No Wrong Door and Staying Close.
- Developing how we work with CAMHS for care experienced young people to improve access and coordinate support.
- Work with health to ensure children and young people have access to a dentist.

##### **What does success look like?**

- Children and young people tell us about their well-being and access to support.
- We deliver against our targets for dental checks, Initial and Review Health Assessments.
- We can demonstrate the impact of No Wrong Door and Staying Close on children's well-being.
- We can demonstrate with health access to and the impact of CAMHS support for children and young people in care.

#### **5) Support into adulthood and independence**

We will support care-experienced young people prepare for independence, developing essential skills, and nurturing meaningful relationships to empower them in their journey towards a successful and fulfilling life.

##### **We will do this by:**

- Update our leaving care pathway so it supports young people to prepare for successfully leaving care.
- Update our local offer for care leavers that allows for more bespoke support for each young person.
- Develop the advice and support offer for care experienced young people beyond the age of 25.
- Review the impact of our housing protocol for care experienced young people.

### **What does success look like?**

- Care leavers tell us how well pathway planning is working.
- We are in contact with care leavers and can demonstrate the impact of pathway planning.
- Care leavers are in suitable accommodation/housing.

### **6) Good corporate parents**

Everyone will play their part in being a good corporate parent by actively fostering a nurturing and inclusive environment that empowers care-experienced young individuals to thrive. Our Children and Young People have a voice in the way we deliver our services and we will act upon what they tell us.

#### **We will do this by:**

- We will ensure the workforce across the city understands their responsibilities as corporate parents.
- The Corporate Parenting Board will provide support and challenge the system to continue to improve.
- We will continue to develop how children and young people can have a voice through Show Me That I Matter, I Still Matter, Advocacy, U\_Matter and through implementing Mind of My Own.
- We will make sure that we celebrate key milestones and achievements with children and young people's.
- We will deliver on our commitments as set out in this strategy.

### **What does success look like?**

- Children and young people tell us they feel listened to and that their voice makes a difference.
- Children and young people tell us they see their milestones and achievements are celebrated.
- We can see Mind of My Own is being used and making a positive difference.
- We are assured the workforce understand their responsibilities as corporate parents
- The Corporate Parenting Board is able to demonstrate the difference it is making.

## ■ Delivering this strategy

The Corporate Parenting Strategy will be implemented through an action plan that will be developed and overseen by the Corporate Parenting Board. The board will review progress on a regular basis and ask for assurance that the strategy is being implemented effectively.

At the heart of tracking progress will be the corporate parenting board hearing directly from children and young people about their lived experience. The board will use this feedback to inform its decision-making and to ensure that the strategy is meeting the needs of children and young people.



If you would like this document in an alternative format, please contact:

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It is available in the following languages:

我們也用您們的語言提供這個信息 (Cantonese)

এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় দেয়া যেতে পারে। (Bengali)

Ta informacja może być dostarczona w twoim własnym języku. (Polish)

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde almanız mümkündür. (Turkish)

یہ معلومات آپ کی اپنی زبان (بولی) میں بھی مہیا کی جاسکتی ہیں۔ (Urdu)

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For further information: West Offices, Station Rise, York YO1 6GA

<b>Date</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>
07 May 2024	1. <i>Work-planning for programme of work for 2024-2025</i>
04 June 2024	- <i>Meeting cancelled</i>
02 July 2024	1. York Pipeline of proposals to York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority 2. Family Hub Network Development Update 3. York Learning
03 September 2024	1. Finance & Performance Q4 ( <i>for information</i> ) [ <i>Postponed from 2 July 2024</i> ] 2. SEND Update 3. School Attendance 4. Youth Strategy Update
01 October 2024	1. Finance & Performance Q1 ( <i>for information</i> ) 2. School Attendance [ <i>Postponed from 3 September 2024</i> ] 3. Early Years and Childcare Reforms 4. Virtual School Annual Report
05 November 2024	1. Free School Meal Pilot Year Review 2. Locality Model – York Neighbourhood Model
03 December 2024	1. Finance & Performance Q2 ( <i>for information</i> ) 2. York Explore Annual Update 3. Placement Sufficiency (Update on Fostering Services, Together We Can, and Family Arrangements) 4. Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report
14 January 2025	1. Digital Inclusion Update 2. SACRE Annual Report 3. Attainment Gap
04 March 2025	1. Finance & Performance Q3 ( <i>for information</i> ) 2. Children Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report 3. Safer York Partnership Report
01 April 2025	1. York Museums Trust Update 2. York Theatre Trust Update 3. REACH Progress Update

**Agenda items for consideration**

- Updates from Task & Finish Groups (detailed below).
- Update from York Centre for Voluntary Services (CVS).
- Review of North Yorkshire Police’s Pilot: “Clear, Hold, Build”.
- Considering results of consultation with York Explore.

**Task & Finish Groups**

- Food Insecurity Task & Finish Group: Members = Cllrs Knight, Nelson.
- Education, Health, and Care Plan Task & Finish Group: Members = Cllrs Clarke, Cuthbertson, Wilson.



<b>Committee Remit</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop &amp; maintain close working with Corporate Parenting Board and York Schools &amp; Academies Board and deliver complimentary agendas where appropriate</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children’s Social Care</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Virtual School for children in care</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Years and childcare</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School effectiveness and achievement, including school attendance and school safeguarding</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School services: School place planning and capital maintenance; School transport; Admissions; The School governance service and SENDIASS; Behaviour and attendance; Elective home education; Children missing education</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEND services &amp; Educational Psychology</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills, including monitoring of York Skills Board; York Learning</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Area Teams, Neighbourhood Working, Community Centres</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People &amp; Neighbourhoods Strategy &amp; Policy</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Safety including Safer York Partnership, Substance Misuse, Anti-Social Behaviour</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early intervention, prevention, and community development</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth Services</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture, including York Theatre Royal, Museums, Music Venues Network (&amp; elements of MIY?)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntary Sector</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Libraries &amp; Archives</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital inclusion strategy</li> </ul>

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