

North Yorkshire Children's Trust Board
21 March 2018
School readiness priority

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 The report provides an update on work undertaken to date on the school readiness priority.

2 Background

- 2.1 At the meeting on the 6th December 2017 the Board agreed that one of the priority areas for 2018 should be school readiness. The Board originally nominated Julie Firth and Richard Chillery to sponsor the priority and work alongside the Council's Strategy and Performance Team. However, following a change in responsibilities within the Children and Families Service, Barbara Merrygold has recently taken on the role of sponsor.
- 2.2 The ambition is to take an evidence-based approach to developing innovative new ways to support development in the early years and re-imagine how interventions could be delivered differently and more successfully without the obstruction of organisational structures.

3 The context

- 3.1 North Yorkshire is marginally above the national performance for pupils achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the Early Years Foundation Stage (71.7%) and performance has improved steadily over the last 3 years. However, this still means that more than one in four children (28.3%) are not achieving a GLD, which in 2017 was equivalent to 1,753 pupils.
- 3.2 This piece of work is not about reviewing current practice, but about looking at the issue afresh and exploring what could be achieved with a new approach. It is recognised that this is a complex issue with a range of determinants and it is therefore likely to require a system-wide approach if it is to be effective.

4 Progress to date

- 4.1 The County Council's Strategy and Performance Team has been developing three key pieces of work which will form part of the evidence review:
- A detailed analysis of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile data
 - A literature review
 - A best practice summary

4.2 The County Council has appointed a project manager and an operational group is being established with representatives from across the Children and Young People's Service and two headteachers.

4.3 Furthermore, Dr Kirstin Kerr from the Centre for Equity in Education at the University of Manchester has agreed to be part of the project team. It is felt that securing an academic with significant knowledge in this area will provide invaluable support and challenge.

5 Next steps

5.1 A detailed project plan is being finalised that will set out the process and timeframe. It is anticipated that the project will run through to late summer 2018 and there will be an opportunity for relevant stakeholders to input.

6 Recommendations

6.1 The Board is asked to note the progress made to date and provide any comment.