

Case Study: Structuring Early Years Teams in North Yorkshire

This case study provides insights into how the large and geographically diverse county of North Yorkshire structures its early years team. This is what they told us.

Where does the early years team sit?

We have organised our early years services to reflect the county's distinct blend of rural and urban areas. Our team sits within the **Early Years and School Improvement Service**¹ which enables us to work closely with school teams, family hubs and teams covering SEND and safeguarding. We also work closely with departments such as public health, facilitating initiatives like the [Active Start programme](#), promoting healthy lifestyles for young children. These partnerships are vital in creating a support network that benefits children across the county.

What do the structure and roles of the team look like?

Our key roles include:

- The **Assistant Director for School Improvement** oversees early years services and reports to the Children and Young People Leadership Team (CYPLT). This helps ensure alignment with county-wide strategic priorities.
- Our **Early Years Strategy Manager** provides strategic oversight, coordinates cross-departmental initiatives and supports early years in out-of-school settings. They also manage the Family Information Service (FIS) team, which has 1.4 FTE staff.
- We have a **Sufficiency Planning Officer**, who ensures local capacity meets local demand. This includes collecting sufficiency data from across the county, which can take extensive time given its rurality.
- We then have a **Wraparound Coordinator** who liaises with schools, PVI providers and childminders to address sufficiency challenges and collaborates with services across the local authority to provide holistic support to providers and families.
- We have two **Early Years Improvement Advisors** who sit in the School Improvement Team, working on quality improvement for all settings. Their bespoke consultancy package includes 1:1 support for head teachers, designing indoor and outdoor spaces, a comprehensive review of early years practice and tailored support for new provision. They collaborate with SEND networks, and offer free online training and safeguarding sessions for early years providers, including childminders. We also offer Dingley's Promise inclusion training free to all early years providers and service colleagues.
- Our **Head of Finance for Schools, Early Years and High Needs** manages the funding team with three full time **Early Years Funding Officers** who oversee funding allocations and work closely with providers to ensure

¹ For more information visit North Yorkshire's Early Years and School Improvement website here:

<https://nyes.info/Page/5496>

accurate data submission and compliance. The Early Years finance team also receive 20 hours of targeted support from the **Business Support Officer** to help set up new providers, including explaining first steps, funding mechanisms and preparing for Ofsted inspections.

The structure at a glance:

<p>Leadership and strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant Director for School Improvement: oversight and reporting. • Early Years Strategy Manager: coordination of cross-departmental initiatives, management of FIS and operational support roles. 	<p>Operational support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficiency Planning Officer: 0.9 FTE. Ensures childcare capacity meets demand. • Wraparound Coordinator: 1 FTE. Liaison with schools, PVI providers and childminders. • Early Years Improvement Advisors: quality improvement. 	<p>Financial management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Finance for Schools, Early Years and High Need: team management. • Early Years Funding Officers: 3 FTE. Funding allocations, provider data and compliance. • Business Support Officer: 0.8 FTE. Setting up new providers.
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What makes this approach a success?

We feel this integrated approach allows us to deliver comprehensive support to children, especially those in remote parts of North Yorkshire, using digital tools and flexible working practices like bi-weekly key messages, which ensures providers are regularly kept up to date, and safeguarding sessions held virtually, allowing providers to attend no matter where they are in the County.

In sum, North Yorkshire’s team structure reflects the county’s focus on efficient resource utilisation and adaptability to meet the unique needs of its diverse geography.