

Lancashire County Council

Corporate Parenting Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 13th March, 2024 at 6.00 pm in Savoy Suite 1 - The Exchange, County Hall, Preston, PR1 8XJ

Present: Members

County Councillor Stephen Clarke	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Loraine Cox	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Julie Gibson	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Sue Hind	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Ron Woollam	- Lancashire County Council
David Russo	- Fostering Forum
Mary	- LINX/CLF Representative
Liam	- LINX/CLF Representative
Emma	- LINX/CLF Representative
Horateo	- LINX/CLF Representative
Chris	- LINX/CLF Representative

Co-opted members

Audrey Swann	- Education Improvement, LCC
Andreas Feldhaar	- Permanence Service, LCC
Gina Power	- Permanence Service - Children in Our Care, LCC
Hayley Kinowski	- Safeguarding, Audit and Inspection, LCC
Amanda Barbour	- Fostering, Adoption Lancashire Blackpool, and Residential Services, LCC
Catherine Brooks	- Child and Family Wellbeing Service, LCC
Neil Drummond	- Lancashire Constabulary PPU
Adam Riley	- Child and Family Wellbeing Service, LCC
April Pollitt	- Child and Family Wellbeing Service, LCC
Maureen Huddleston	- Enhanced CLA Health Teams, UHMB
Caroline Waldron	- Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board
Bev Maymond	- Fostering Provider
Clare Platt	- Health, Equity, Welfare and Partnerships, LCC (via Teams)

Other Attendees

Jennifer Robertshaw	- Permanence Service, LCC
Clare Smith	- Policy, Commissioning and Children's Health, LCC
Sam Gorton	- Democratic Services, LCC

1. Icebreaker

Young people from Lancashire's Children in Care Council (LINX) and Care Leavers Forum (CLF) opened the meeting with an icebreaker.

2. Introductions and Apologies

All were welcomed to the meeting and apologies were received from County Councillor Andrea Kay, Katy Hodkinson, Andy Smith, Moya McKinney, Brendan Lee, Louise Humphreys, Ripley Buswell, Alex Wood and Louise Anderson.

Clare Platt, Health Equity, Welfare and Partnerships joined the meeting via Teams.

3. Notes of the Meeting and Matters Arising from 10 January 2024

Resolved: That the minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4. Participation Team Update

Young people from Lancashire's Children in Care Council (LINX) and the Care Leavers Forum (CLF) updated the Board on preparation for a meeting on 25 March 2024 with Lancashire County Council's Executive Leadership Team which would include Directors and Heads of Service from Growth, Environment and Transport, Education and Children Services, Adult Services, Health and Wellbeing and Resources and Communications. The meeting is leading on from the whole Council's approach to The Care Leaver Covenant, will add to the value of the Local Offer, awareness raising, training and employment, policy partnership, the social value toolkit and economic development which all come together to increase the effectiveness in improving outcomes for care experienced children and young people. The meeting will reiterate to all those present that the Council needs to accept the responsibility that everyone within it, employees and Councillors are a corporate parent, and this does not solely reside with Children's Services that lead on supporting care experienced children and young people. Young people will also aim to reaffirm the belief that Lancashire County Council is the 'family firm' and that all care experienced children and young people are treated with the same respect and values as anyone else when it comes to employment, training, independent living, policy, finances, health, safety and security. Following the presentation at the session,

time for tabletop discussions will follow, to see what new developments and changes can be looked at and put into place to continue to develop the Local Offer for care experienced children and young people across Lancashire.

During the meeting, young people will be outlining how they feel Lancashire County Council can support them whilst they are in the care of the Local Authority such as:

- Travel - This represents a significant challenge for them in terms of moving around Lancashire for work, education or for socialising. They are asking for assistance with transport, including bus passes and rail cards to enable more affordable travel.
- Culture Cards/Leisure Facilities - Access to leisure facilities through a culture card which would be beneficial, along with designated days for outdoor education centre visits.
- Increasing job opportunities, particularly within Lancashire County Council, for employment, apprenticeships and work experience which can lead to further career prospects. Young people feel that mentorship is crucial during these placements.
- Local Offer - Business Support is required for obtaining a provisional license or passport which is essential. Simplifying the ID application process is necessary for ensuring valid identification.
- Moving home - Having access to a fleet of vans for logistical support is essential.
- Community services to be easily accessible, such as seeking help at local libraries in times of need.
- Employment Support - Providing legal support for understanding documents and involving students to assist and share their experiences could be beneficial.
- Introductory Taster Days - Exploring opportunities for introductory days in digital services, marketing, HR and other fields can help individuals discover their career paths.
- Training opportunities in catering services, social value promotion and alternative recruitment methods are valuable additions.
- When commissioning services, it is crucial to evaluate how they support care-experienced children and young people, ensuring they meet the standards any parent would expect for their own child/children.
- Many of the initiatives could be implemented at low or no cost to the Authority.

Following the presentation, the Board were asked to work in groups to see if there was anything further that could be added in order to enhance the 'ask' at the Executive Leadership Team session.

Some points from the discussion were as follows:

- A commitment to hold some accountability for delivery before leaving the meeting. Young people have designed a template using the SMART layout

and these will be distributed in the session to complete and will be held as a toolkit for accountability for delivery.

- For young people to think about what their most important point is and to ensure it is delivered in the meeting.
- For young people to have a skills directory and to build this across all the partnerships from the point of recruitment.
- Share with colleagues in other directorates that there is an Instagram page for young people with a challenge back to those directorates about how they can use Instagram to target and advertise specific jobs that young people might be interested in or things that are going on in other directorates, events in communities and share directly with them via the Instagram page.
- Ensure a copy of the Local Offer is received prior to the meeting and that young people carry out a benchmarking exercise against other Local Authorities with an outstanding leaving care judgment and take some examples of what they do that Lancashire maybe do not have and to put the challenge back and ask what ideas the Executive Leadership may have.
- Andreas Feldhaar, Permanence Service, Lancashire County Council, prior to the session will be circulating the Corporate Parenting Promise so attendees can remind themselves of the priorities and will include a link to the Local Offer, so that ideas from Directorates can be brought to the session.

Resolved: That young people were thanked for their presentation and the Board wished them lots of luck for the meeting on 25 March 2024.

5. Adoption Service Report

Karen Barker, Fostering, Adoption Lancashire and Blackpool, Residential Services, Lancashire County Council provided a condensed overview of the Adoption Lancashire and Blackpool Corporate Parenting Statement, highlighting key aspects and outcomes achieved during the reporting period of 1 April – 30 September 2023.

The Board noted that the commitment of Adoption Lancashire and Blackpool to both Lancashire County Council and Blackpool Councils Corporate Parenting Boards underscores the responsibility to every child who has a care plan of adoption in both Local Authorities as part the Councils responsibilities to ensure the well-being and development of every child with a care plan of adoption. The statement focuses on Adoption Lancashire and Blackpool's adoption initiatives to achieve for as many children as possible permanency through adoption by securing loving and secure adoptive homes. Whilst ensuring that every effort has been made for those children who do not achieve an adoptive home.

Further details of the key achievements can be found in the report appended to the minutes.

The Board noted that five North West Regional Adoption Agencies were working together creatively to promote better outcomes for adopted children such as:

- Matching – piloted child network meetings
- Concurrency for 4-8 year olds – created new training, support groups and support materials for adopters caring for children under fostering regulations.
- Commissioning of therapy for adoptive families – North West assessment of need being undertaken.
- Adoption Support – improving relations with Child and Adult Mental Health Services, by promoting joint working.

The Board were informed that over the last six months, there has been a reduction in numbers of children waiting for an adoptive home.

Resolved: That the Board noted the Adoption Lancashire and Blackpool six monthly report from April to September 2023.

6. Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board Health Strategy

Caroline Waldron, Children in Care and Care Leavers, Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board presented the Children in Care and Care Leavers Health Strategy 2024-2026 that had been circulated to the Board prior to the meeting.

The Board were informed that NHS England references their response to the voice of children who live or have lived in care in the updated Safeguarding Accountability and Assurance Framework. They also noted that the legislative term of 'looked after children' had been replaced with 'Children in Care (CiC)'.

The Integrated Care Boards as statutory partners have a duty to co-operate with Local Authorities for undertaking corporate parenting responsibilities. As commissioners of health services, they should also ensure that appropriate arrangements and resources are in place to meet the physical and mental health needs of children in care.

The Board noted that in terms of the development of the strategy young people's voices were considered which included positive feedback also and are now included in the strategy.

The purpose of the strategy was as follows:

- It is included in the Josh McAllister May 2022 care review, the recommendations for all Integrated Care Boards to publish their plans.
- The strategy sets out delivery against Integrated Care Board statutory responsibilities and corporate parenting duties.

- The vision statement:
 - "To ensure all children in care and care leavers will be afforded the opportunity to achieve positive health outcomes. This will be facilitated by the effective commissioning and delivery of health services across the Integrated Care Board to reduce any unwarranted variation in service offer, scope of service and equity of access. The Integrated Care Board has pledged to move to a Trauma Informed system, which will continue to build health commissioned services that will deliver trauma practice, with a skilled workforce who are knowledgeable around their individual roles and responsibilities as corporate parents".

It was outlined to the Board, the following next steps:

- Delivery Plan to provide assurance and drive the key outcomes and deliverables.
- Measures of success.
- Compliance with performance for the provision of timely and high-quality statutory health assessments for children in care.
- Integrated Care Board consultation and engagement model with our children in care and care leavers, to co-produce and inform health service delivery and commissioning of services.
- The strengths and difficulties questionnaire average score demonstrates good emotional health for our children in care.
- There is no unwarranted variation in access to health services and children placed away from their originating area are not disadvantaged.
- Compliance with all statutory health responsibilities reported via an ICB dashboard.
- Positive feedback from children and young people around their experiences and access to health services that we are getting it right and providing a trauma informed approach.
- Health professionals and key stakeholders provide positive feedback regarding the health services afforded to children in care and care leavers and their accessibility.
- External regulatory activity identifies good and outstanding practice which can be evidenced as having an impact on reducing health inequalities.

The Board noted that there are 42 Integrated Care Boards across the North West and Lancashire and South Cumbria are the first to implement the strategy which was agreed in December 2023.

Following the presentation, the following comments were noted:

- Young peoples' views are captured through various approaches such as part of their health assessments, completing a survey or from young people led meetings such as the Young Peoples Corporate Parenting Board meeting held in July 2023.

- It was requested that the action plan be shared with partners to enable them to support the delivery of the strategy and to help improve services and engagement.

Resolved: That the Corporate Parenting Board:

- i) Noted the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board Health Strategy.
- ii) Agreed to receive an update at a future board with regards to the plan and its achievements.

7. Our Voice, Emotional Health and Wellbeing Pilot

Kirsty Hamer, Children's Services, Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board and Sue Monaghan, Emotional Health and Wellbeing Team, Child Action North West gave a presentation on the 'Our Voice' Therapeutic Support Pilot Scheme that was conducted in Pennine Lancashire.

In terms of background there was a redesign of Child and Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS) a few years ago and as part of that, there were several workshops around the care of the most vulnerable children and young people which included children with special educational needs, children in the Youth Justice System and children in care. As part of the workshop developments, regular feedback from practitioners was:

- Lack of trauma support for children in care
- Children in Care impacted by trauma do not necessarily meet the threshold for Child and Adult Mental Health Services
- Waiting lists for psychological services – may not be the best support for Children in Care
- Increase in placement breakdowns – anecdotal
- Lack of "therapeutic placements" for Children in Care

There was a funding opportunity which had been received from the Third Sector for a 12 month pilot on a support model (based on feedback) for Children in Care that could include:

- One to one therapy support
- Support an earlier intervention to Child and Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS)/psychology
- Support whilst on a waiting list
- Peer support/group work
- Diversionary work to support Children in Care

The Board received further information on the development of the pilot and outcomes so far, such as:

- Work of the Steering Group

- Evidence based findings
- Consultation with children and young people (both primary and secondary schools)
- Mobilisation (76 young people are currently in the service receiving therapeutic support progressing to diversionary group activities and 1:1 sessions)
- Data – referrals by age, gender and ethnicity
- Challenges and solutions
- Project support
- Group and diversionary activities
- Feedback from children and young people
- Carer and referrer feedback
- Evaluating the support
- The impact
- External evaluation
- The future

Resolved: That the Board noted the presentation on the Our Voice, Emotional Health and Wellbeing pilot.

8. Any Other Business

The Board were informed that £1,596 had been raised for schemes or projects for care leavers from the sale of Lancashire County Council merchandise and that it would continue to be sold in Reflections, County Hall, Preston.

9. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday, 8 May 2024 at 6.00pm in Savoy Suite 1, The Exchange, County Hall, Preston, PR1 8RJ.



Executive Summary of the Corporate Parenting Statement for Adoption Lancashire & Blackpool 1 April – 30 September 2023.

This executive summary provides a condensed overview of Adoption Lancashire & Blackpool Corporate Parenting Statement, highlighting key aspects and outcomes achieved during this reporting period.

Introduction:

The commitment of Adoption Lancashire & Blackpool to both Lancashire County Council and Blackpool Councils Corporate Parenting Boards underscores our responsibility to every child who has a care plan of adoption in both Local Authorities as part the Councils responsibilities to ensure the well-being and development of every child with a care plan of adoption. This statement focuses on Adoption Lancashire & Blackpool's adoption initiatives to achieve for as many children as possible permanency through adoption by securing loving and secure adoptive homes. Whilst ensuring that every effort has been made for those children who do not achieve an adoptive home.

Key Achievements:

Over this reporting period:

- 39 children were adopted (21 Lancashire County Council and 18 Blackpool Council) demonstrating a significant impact as they will grow up in secure and loving families.
- 42 children (19 Lancashire County Council and 23 Blackpool Council) were matched to adoptive families.
- 41 children (19 Lancashire County Council and 22 Blackpool Council) were placed with their forever families.
- 24 adopters were approved who can provided adoptive children with permanent loving homes.
- 73 items were presented to the Adoption Panel
- Adoption Lancashire & Blackpool is part of 3 Regional adoption Agencies strategic BID's.
- Managers have worked as part of national working groups to develop new practices in adoption.

Collaborative Approach:

Adoption Lancashire & Blackpool works collaboratively with both Lancashire County Council and Blackpool Council. This approach allows for Adoption Lancashire & Blackpool to be a critical friend to the two local authorities and via ser versa, to be

creative, review and develop adoption practice to promote better outcomes for adopted children.

Whilst Adoption Lancashire & Blackpool continue to work regionally with regional partners and has been awarded monies to look at commissioning in adoption support.

Success Stories:

Highlighted within this statement is the data showing adoption successes, illustrating the positive impact of adoption on the lives of adopted children and their families.

Challenges and solutions:

Addressing challenges head-on, Adoption Lancashire & Blackpool have identified areas for improvement in governance via the Adoption Lancashire & Blackpool Board and post approval training of adopters and implemented targeted strategies to develop practice. Our proactive approach ensures continuous development of adoption practice in Adoption Lancashire & Blackpool, Lancashire County Council and Blackpool Council.

Statutory Compliance:

Upholding compliance is paramount in adoption. During this period an Adoption Support audit has been implemented. This builds on the Recruitment and Assessment audit implemented in the previous reporting period. This statement underscores Adoption Lancashire & Blackpool's unwavering commitment to compliance with all regulations and guidelines to develop good practice.

Future Initiatives:

Adoption Lancashire & Blackpool commitment to continuous improvement ensures that adoption continues to develop to meet the changing needs of adopted children, adopters, and birth families. This statement considers the planned initiatives for the next period including the implementation of post approval training, improving feedback and the adoption dashboard.

In conclusion this statement provides information to the Lancashire and Blackpool Corporate Parenting Boards, to ensure that they are aware of progress in adoption and are reassured that Adoption Lancashire & Blackpool is meeting its responsibilities and understand the progress and challenges in adoption.

Karen Barker
Senior Manager
Adoption Lancashire & Blackpool
31 January 2024