

Please note refreshments are available in the room from 5.30pm

## Agenda

**1. Introductions and Apologies**

*County Councillor Prynn*

To note who is attending and receive any apologies for absence.

**2. Notes of the Meeting and Matters Arising held on 24 April 2014** (Pages 1 - 6)

*County Councillor Prynn*

To agree for accuracy the notes of the meeting and receive any matters arising.

**3. What our Elected Members have been doing (15 mins)**

*County Councillor Prynn and other Elected Members*

To note feedback from work undertaken by the Chair of the Board and our Elected Members as part of their role on the CPB, including Members' visits.

**4. Action Sheet (5 mins)** (Pages 7 - 8)

*County Councillor Prynn*

To discuss where the actions from previous meetings are up to.

### What have our Young People been doing?

**5. LINX (Lancashire's Children in Care Council) (60 mins)** (Pages 9 - 18)

*Young People and Barnardos*

To receive feedback on the work our young people have been doing:

Influencing Services, APPG, Pupil Premium, Feedback on Performance Report and Budgeting for Care Leavers

### What Do We Need to Know

**6. Activity Days (15 mins)** (To Follow)

*County Councillor Prynn*

To discuss the recommendations to be made by the Board.

**7. Fostering for Adoption and Concurrent Placements (5 mins)** (Pages 19 - 22)

*Diane Booth*

To note the report requested by CPB at the meeting on 24 April 2014.

**8. Changes to CLA Personal Educational Plans (PEPS) and Pupil Premium Grant Conditions (15 mins)**

*Mark Robson*

To receive the presentation on the changes.

**9. Any Other Business**

*County Councillor Pryn*

To receive any other business.

**10. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

*County Councillor Pryn*

Thursday, 24 July 2014 at **1.00pm** in the Duke of Lancaster Room (formerly Cabinet Room 'C'), County Hall, Preston, PR1 8RJ.

This meeting is where the young people take over in setting the agenda and chairing the meeting.

# Agenda Item 2

## Lancashire County Council

### Corporate Parenting Board

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 24th April, 2014 at 6.00 pm in Cabinet Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston**

**Present: Members**

County Councillor Lorraine Beavers	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Margaret Brindle	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Chris Henig	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Sue Pryn	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Ian Brown	- Lancashire County Council
Jane Simpson	- representing Foster Carers
Catherine Cosslett	- representing Adoption
Bob Stott	- Director of Universal and Early Support Services
County Councillor Miss Kim Snape	- Lancashire County Council
Rachel Bland	- representing Foster Carers
Five Young People	- LINX Representatives

**Co-opted members**

Mark Hudson	- or his representative, representing Independent Reviewing Officers
Sue Parr	- representing The Virtual School, Lancashire County Council
Nicola Bamford	- Designated Doctor and Consultant Paediatrician, representing CCG
Diane Booth	- Children's Social Care
Kate Baggaley	- Barnardos
Mia Whitbread	- Barnardos

**Other Attendees**

Louise Burton	- CCG
Richard Cooke	- Quality and Continuous Improvement Team
Sam Gorton (Clerk)	- Governance Team
Brendan Lee	- ACERS
Finlay McCalman	- Business Support Team
Annette McNeil	- Integrated Health Service

## **1. Introductions and Apologies**

All were welcomed to the meeting and the following apologies were noted:

Kathy Ashworth, Marc Bentley, Debbie Ross and Catherine Poole.

## **2. Notes of the Meeting and Matters Arising from 6 February 2014**

The notes of the previous meeting on 6 February 2013 were noted as an accurate record. There were no actions arising from the notes that were not being picked up elsewhere on the agenda.

## **3. What our Elected Members have been doing**

Members of the Board (County Councillors Prynne, Brown and Henig) updated the board on their activities since the last meeting.

The Board was asked to note that the Grant Funding Scheme has now ceased and will not be replaced. The outstanding balance has now been carried forward to enable the Proud Celebration Event and the Conference to take place next year.

Concern was raised by County Councillors Brown and Brindle whom attended an Adoption Activity Day that this had not been brought via the Board prior to its arrangement. Councillors felt that the organisation of the day could have been better. Barnardos have also expressed concerns regarding activity days as a whole. An evaluation of such days has been carried out by Manchester Metropolitan University however, it does not appear to be published anywhere.

It was proposed that a letter from the Board be sent outlining their feedback on the day including suggestions for the future.

Diane Booth agreed to feedback to the Head of Service for Adoption and bring the initial feedback from the event to the next meeting.

## **4. Action Sheet**

Staying Put/Leaving Care is high on the agenda for the coming year. 80% of care leavers access some form of service within the Authority after 2-3 years of leaving care. A piece of work is being carried out by the Social Care Research Unit (SCRU) to look at this as well as homeless 16/17 year olds. This work will commence at the end of May 2014.

Diane Booth agreed to report back at the next meeting.

## **5. CYPP**

Richard Cooke gave a brief background around the consultation process and that young people felt that a video was the best way of getting the message across regarding the Plan. A premier of the video will be held on 19 May 2014 where all children and families that have contributed will be invited to attend. The Plan will be presented to Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools for approval on 13 May 2014.

Richard introduced the video, reiterating that it was still in draft mode. The Board felt that it was too long, especially if being used on social media – a condensed one would be better. The young people enjoyed the video, however, felt that there should be a condensed version. They also felt it was much better than having a paper copy.

It was agreed that Richard would come back to the next meeting to update the Board on how they were going to deliver the plan.

## **6. New Inspection Framework**

Bob Stott spoke to the presentation attached and informed the Board that Ofsted were due between now and January/February 2015. Training sessions are planned for County Councillors in preparing for inspection.

## **7. SEND Reforms, CLA Strategy and Adoption Agency Report May-Oct 2013**

Diane Booth updated the Board on the SEND Reforms attached to the agenda. Work is being carried out to implement one system for 0-25 year olds for Education, Care and Health Assessment. There is a new system for fastracking complaints. Briefing sessions will be held for Elected Members if it needs revisiting and Diane Booth will inform the Head of Service. The focus is on Out of Area placements and the need to reduce these.

It was agreed that Diane Booth will bring the Sufficiency Strategy to the next meeting.

It was also requested that data on CLA resident in Lancashire and whether they are from or out of County be sought and reported on at the next meeting by Diane Booth.

The CLA Strategy was not brought to this meeting.

Diane spoke to Fostering and Adoption report that was attached to the agenda and the Board were asked to note that there is a shortage of adopters and that a range of activities have been arranged to recruit more.

There was a request on data on how many foster carers become adopters. Diane Booth agreed to seek this information from the Head of Service.

## **8. Regulation 33 Inspections**

Brendan Lee presented the attached powerpoint, informing the Board that there are 10 mainstream residential settings and eight overnight break units.

Elected Members have been receiving bite size briefings to enable them to carry out Regulation 22 visits.

County Councillor Prynne will draw up a timetable of visits for all Elected Members that have undertaken the training so these can be carried out as required as part of their role on the Corporate Parenting Board.

## **9. LINX (Lancashire's Children in Care Council)**

Apologies were made to the young people as the meeting had over run which would result in their time being shortened.

It was agreed that at the next meeting, the young people's item would be in the first half of the meeting.

It was noted that Mark (young person) had spoken at the Chairman's Dinner for Foster Carers on 23 April 2014 and that several carers had commented on what a fantastic speech he had delivered.

Congratulations were also passed on to the LINX group for their contribution to North West Regional Corporate Parenting Board Conference in February where they ran one of the workshops – Having your Voice Heard as a CLA.

LINX presented to the Board what they had been doing since the last CPB meeting and to elaborate on the ITV Fixers stereotyping work they had been doing. However due to staffing levels, this was now on hold and will inform the Board when work progresses on this.

One of the members of LINX is also a part of the Amplify Group and are looking at a new project to start on mental health for all children, however CLA will be playing a key part in this.

LINX took the Board through the Performance Report. Sue Parr commented that attendance figures for CLA were improving.

It was agreed that Sue Parr report back at the next meeting on attainments.

## **10. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**11. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The Board noted its next scheduled meeting was to be held on Thursday, 19 June 2014 at 6.00pm with light refreshments available from 5.30pm.

**12. Grant Funding Applications**

This item was for information only.

**13. In House Newsletter Special Edition (January 2014)**

This item was for information only.





## Corporate Parenting Board – Action Sheet – as at 5 February 2014

<b>You Said</b>	<b>We Said</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Pupil Premium - you wanted to know how they were used in schools for the young people they were provided for.	Through Louise Taylor the Executive Director for Children and Young People Barnardos has been asked to prepare a letter to all schools to find out how the money is used.	A letter has been drafted and a discussion was to take place with Sue Parr to agree how best to get in schools
Staying Put/Leaving Care – an update was needed on these important issues.	We would bring a report to the Board and it is on the agenda tonight.	A leaving care leaflet was in production which would be shared with a future Board meeting.  Regarding staying put the policy would be brought to a future Board meeting to review in light of the age limit going up to 21.
Suicide – how many young people in care in Lancashire have died due to suicide.	We would research figures for CLA across Lancashire.	This would continue to be on the Board's radar and relevant information would be brought as and when appropriate.
Photographic Consent - an agreed policy across the whole of Lancashire is needed.	We would look at the current policy.	Work had been undertaken in this area and a policy had been developed and signed off by the cabinet member.
Inform a report to the All Party Parliamentary Group.	We would like the report to be shared with the Board.	Young People have been working on this and will share views with the Board.
CLA exclusions – concern over the number and the lack of information available to the Board.	The appropriate information be found and brought to a future meeting.	

Advocacy must be used more in relation to issues involving young people.	The Board agreed to promote the use of advocacy on every appropriate occasion.	
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# Agenda Item 5

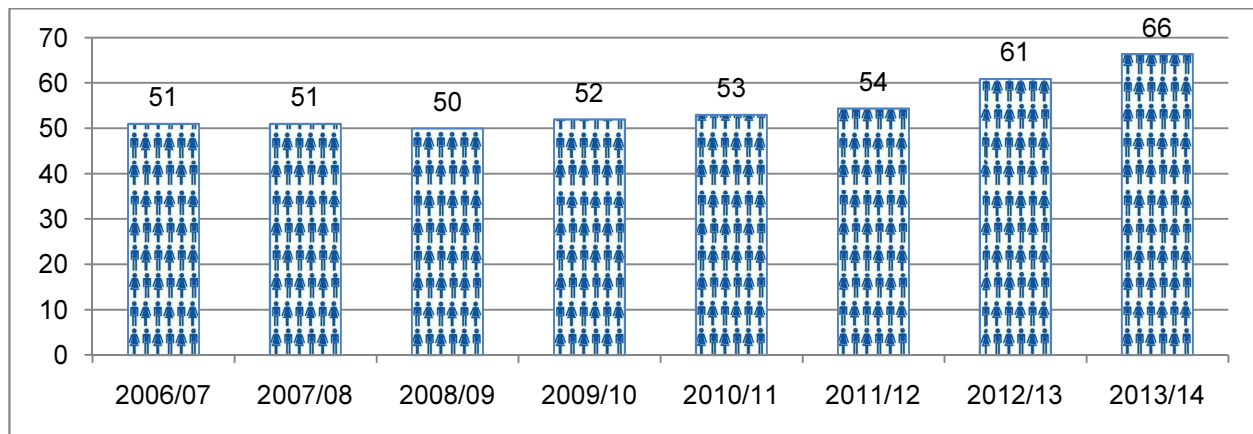
## CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD PERFORMANCE REPORT, 31<sup>ST</sup> MAY 2014

Lancashire changed its integrated children's system from ISSIS to LCS in February 2014; this severely impacted on the ability to report accurate performance, as such all information given below should be considered as provisional and subject to change.

### ACTIVITY FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AND CARE LEAVERS

#### NUMBER OF CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER

- As at the end of May 2014, there are **1,624** children looked after in Lancashire.
- For every **10,000** children and young people in Lancashire, **67** are currently looked after.
- This is higher than in previous years, and the number of children looked after in Lancashire continues to increase each month.
- There are **more** children looked after in Lancashire than in England where 60 out of 10,000 are currently looked after.
- There are **less** children looked after in Lancashire than the North West (79 out of 10,000) and slightly less than in Lancashire's statistical neighbours (67 out of 10,000).



#### COMMENTS:

- ❖ Lancashire's number of children looked after continues to increase, and has now risen above the England average.
- ❖ Lancashire's number of children looked after is lower than that of Lancashire's statistical neighbours and lower than the average of other North West local authorities.

#### SERVICE ACTIVITY

Service activity helps to explain the rise in the number of children looked after in Lancashire:

- The contact centre has received more referrals than in previous years, although less contacts.
- The social work teams have moved from initial and core assessments to a new single assessment from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014. Data on these assessments is only just becoming available, so levels of activity will not be known until sufficient information is available.
- With more children and young people than ever been identified for referral and assessment, more children are becoming looked after as a result.



	Previous Performance				Current Performance	
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	May 2014
Contacts <i>per month</i>	--	998	1284	1525	750	--
Referrals <i>per month</i>	1470	1389	1175	1370	1679	--
Initial Assessments	8636	10071	9891	11288	11865	--
Core Assessments	2932	4246	5019	5901	5724	--
Single Assessment <i>per month</i>	--	--	--	--	--	1060

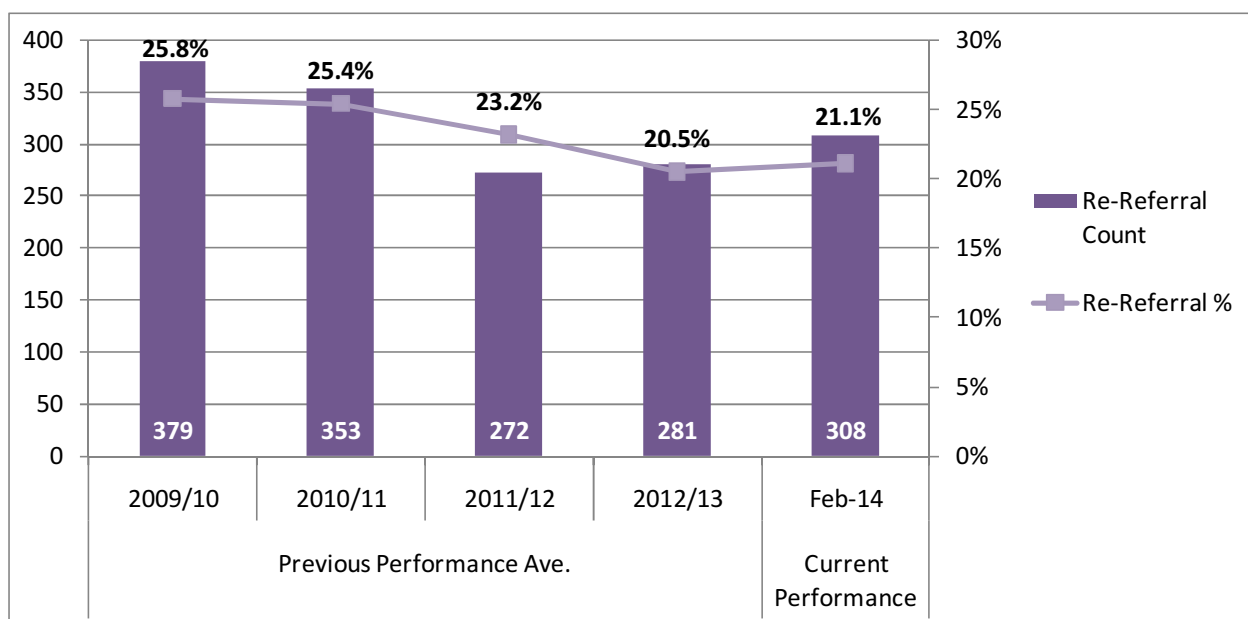
### COMMENTS:

- ❖ Since the introduction of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in April 2013, a large number of contacts from the Police have been passed to MASH rather than going through Care Connect. As a result, contacts have reduced significantly.
- ❖ Due to multi-agency approach of MASH, the average referrals per month is currently 1679 which is significantly higher than the amount received in previous years and increasing demand on Social Workers.
- ❖ From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 initial and core assessments were discontinued and the new single assessment was introduced. Levels of assessment will be become clear as more data becomes available.

### RE-REFERRAL RATE

A number of referrals that the authority receives are re-referrals; that is a child or young person has been referred to Children's Social Care once and is being referred again.

- Re-referral rates have historically declined which was considered good performance
- However, these have increased recently and were reported at 21.1% in February 2014
- Average re-referral for 13/14 to date has increased slightly to 23 re-referrals out of each 100 referrals received



### COMMENTS:

- ❖ Re-referral data is not easily reportable from the new system yet, however although the re-referral rate was reported as being at 30.7% at the end of April 2014 caution should be given to the accuracy of these figures at this stage.
- ❖ Young people are concerned about these rising figures and would like to know why there are more re-referrals?

### STABILITY OF PLACEMENTS OF CLA: NUMBER OF MOVES

How many children looked after moved placement twice during the past year:



- Out of 100 children looked after, Lancashire targets to have less than 10 children looked after having to move twice or more during the year
- Latest information shows that **8** out of 100 children looked have moved twice or more which is good performance and within the target
- This is also an improvement on last year when 9 out of 100 children looked had to move twice or more during the year

Previous Performance		Current Performance	Target	Performance Direction?
2011/12	2012/13	2013/14		
9.5%	8.7%	7.8%	9.5%	
↘	↘	↘	✓	

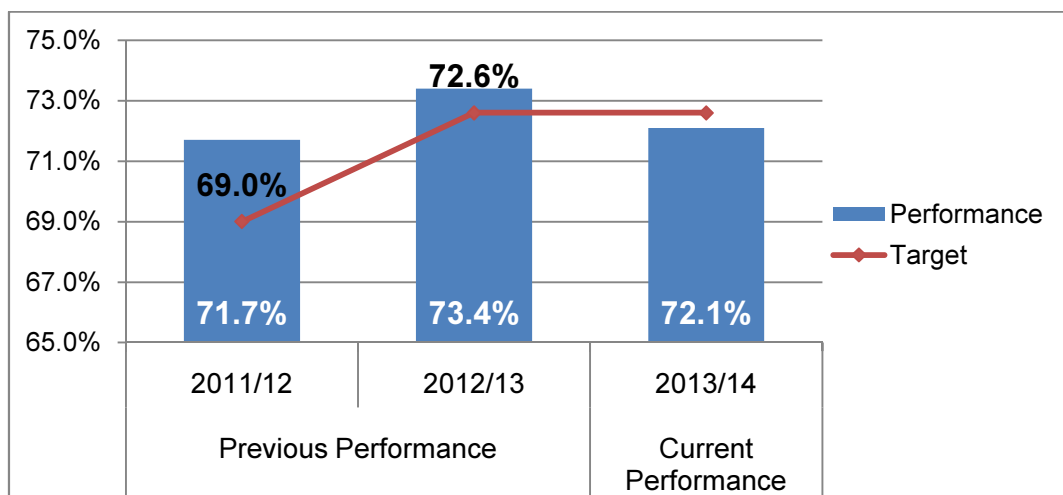
### COMMENTS:

- ❖ Lancashire has carried out good placement stability work through research projects and improved processes, which has resulted in better performance and improved stability.
- ❖ Fewer children than ever have more than 2 placement moves, but further improvements are possible (only 7 out 100 moved in September 2012).
- ❖ Young people are happy that this is less than last year however they would like to see more research and reasons into what causes placement moves.

### STABILITY OF PLACEMENTS OF CLA: LENGTH OF PLACEMENTS

How many children looked after have been in their current placement for at least 2 years:

- Out of 100 children looked after, Lancashire targets to have more than 72 children looked after settled for a long time in their current placement.
- February 2014 information shows that **72** out of 100 children looked are in a long and stable placement, which is good performance, but below our target.
- Current performance is an improvement on performance from 2 years ago, but slightly lower than last year's performance.



#### COMMENTS:

- ❖ Lancashire has carried out good work on placement stability through research projects and improved processes.
- ❖ This has resulted in better performance and improved stability for children looked after.
- ❖ Young people feel that it is positive that 72% of young people have been settled in their placement.

#### CHILDREN MISSING FROM CARE

Lancashire County Council works with multiple agencies including Lancashire Police, to monitor the levels of children missing from care. A recent workgroup has come together to improve the information about these children and young people, and this year's information is below:

	2013/14 Q1	2013/14 Q2	2013/14 Q3	2013/14 Q4
Lancashire CLA missing	88	119	92	56
Number CLA from other LAs missing	103	89	80	83
Other Children known to Lancashire CSC	173	141	53	41
Other Children Missing	258	255	345	480
<b>Children Missing with Lancashire boundaries</b>	<b>622</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>660</b>

#### COMMENT:

- ❖ In Lancashire, around 6 out of 100 children looked after go missing during a quarter, although this was much improved in the most recent quarter.
- ❖ The numbers represent the number of children looked after, and some children have multiple instances of going missing, an average of 1½ missing episodes per child.

## OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER

Outcomes data from education is displayed by academic year rather than financial year.



### **Educational Attainment of Children Looked After**

The key indicator used to measure attainment is the number of children and young people who get 5 GCSEs at grades A\* to C including English and Maths:

- Performance for 2012/13 has been published and performance remains at 12.9% as it was in 2011/12 which was higher than the previous year.
- CLA attainment remains significantly lower than attainment for all children and young people of whom 6 out of 10 achieve 5 GCSEs at A\*-C

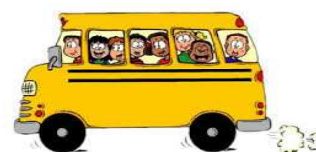
	Previous Performance		Current Performance	Target	Performance Direction?
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13		
Lancs	11.9%	12.9%	12.9%	18.0%	😊
	↘	↗	↗	×	
England	13.6%	15.0%	15.3%	Higher	☹️

### COMMENT:

- ❖ In Lancashire, attainment at GCSE among the children looked after remained stable in 2012/13, but remains below performance of 18.6% from 2009/10.
- ❖ Across England, just over 15 per 100 children looked after achieved 5 A\*-C, slightly more than Lancashire's 13 per 100.
- ❖ Attainment by children looked after remains somewhat behind their peers with 6 out of 10 children and young people achieving 5 GCSEs at grades A\* to C inc. English and Maths.

## ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL BY CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER

Attendance at school is expressed as a percentage of all possible school sessions attended by all children looked after:



- Attendance in primary school was slightly below target with all children looked after only missing 5 out of every 100 sessions in school
- Attendance in secondary school was slightly worse than last year, with all children looked after missing 8 out of every 100 sessions in school

	Previous Performance		Current Performance	Target	Performance Direction?
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13		
Primary	96.3%	96.2%	95.0%	96.0%	☹️
	↗	↘	↘	×	
Secondary	92.5%	94.3%	92.0%	96.0%	☹️
	↘	↗	↘	×	

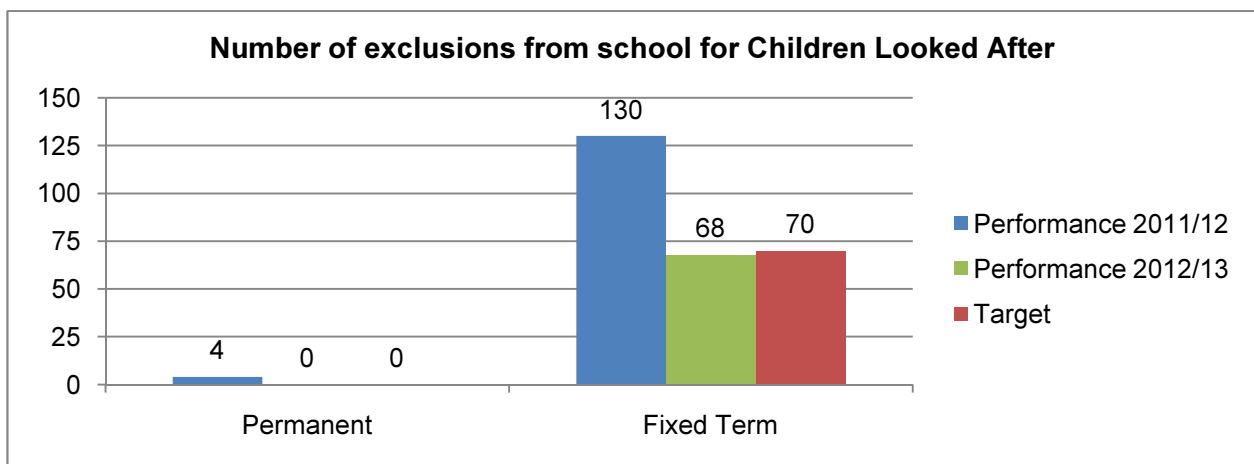
### COMMENTS:

- ❖ Young people would like to know more about why young people are missing school and what factors are impacting on their ability to attend school?

### EXCLUSIONS FROM SCHOOL OF CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER

Exclusions from school are included as a pure number of children looked after either permanently excluded or on fixed term exclusion:

- In the last year there were no permanent exclusions of children looked after
- In the last year there were 68 fixed term exclusions of children looked after
- These numbers are both within the targets set by corporate parenting board and a significant improvement on the previous year



### COMMENTS:

- ❖ Exclusions have dropped significantly in this academic year compared to a high level in the previous year.
- ❖ Young people would like there to be more research into the reasons for fixed term exclusions. Are schools aware of other factors in the young persons' lives that may be affecting their behaviour at school? If so, are schools offering the right support for those young people?

### CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER IN YOUNG OFFENDER INSTITUTIONS OR SECURE UNITS

- There are a small number of children looked after placed in young offender institutions or secure units, 6 as at 31<sup>st</sup> May 2014.
- 3 out of 100 children looked after are involved with the youth offending teams, while less than 1 out of 100 children and young people are involved with youth offending teams.
- Children looked after are therefore three times as likely to be involved with youth offending teams.



## CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER WITH AN UP-TO-DATE HEALTH AND DENTAL ASSESSMENTS

- 66 out of 100 children looked after have an up-to-date health assessment (February 2014)
- This is a lower level of up-to-date health assessments than in the previous year
- 84 out of 100 children looked after have an up-to-date dental assessment (February 2014)
- This is a higher level of up-to-date dental assessments than in the previous year

### COMMENTS:

- ❖ Lancashire is investing in the improvement of oral health through the Smile 4 Life campaign which has been running since 2010.
- ❖ This has been nationally acclaimed for its successes in raising awareness and improving oral health.
- ❖ Young people feel that the percentage of those with an up-to-date health assessment should be higher – somewhere between 90% and 95%.



## ADOPTION AND PERMANENCE

### ADOPTION ORDERS

- **196** children looked after have been adopted over the last 3 years.
- The number of adoptions increased to 75 children looked after being adopted in 2012/13, higher than in previous years.
- Figures show that **83** children looked after were adopted in 2013/14, an improvement on the previous year



### SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP ORDER (SGO) OR RESIDENCE ORDERS (RO)

Special guardianship orders or residence orders are an alternative to adoption, but still provide children looked after with a permanent home:

- 17 out of 100 children looked after were given a permanent home under special guardianship order during 2013/14, a big improvement on previous years
- 10 out of 100 children looked after were given a permanent home under residence order during 2013/14, a slight decrease on performance last year

### COMMENTS:

- ❖ Overall more children looked after than ever are being provided with a permanent home under adoption, special guardianship order or residence orders; 43 out of 100 children looked after in the last year (2013/14) which represents considerable success.

## OUTCOMES FOR CARE LEAVERS

### CARE LEAVERS IN SUITABLE ACCOMMODATION (OLD NI 147)

Suitable accommodation is regarded as suitable if it provides safe, secure and affordable provision for young people. The percentage of care leavers at age 19 that are living in "suitable accommodation":



- In 2013/14, out of 100 care leavers, **82** are considered to be in suitable accommodation
- This is lower than two years ago, when 93 out of 100 were in suitable accommodation

#### COMMENTS:

- ❖ The number of care leavers in suitable accommodation has declined from a high level in 2010/11 to a lower level in recent years. This is below the target of 89 out of 100.

### CARE LEAVERS IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING (OLD NI 148)

The percentage of care leavers at 19 who are engaged in education, training or employment:



- As at the end of 2013/14, **48** out of 100 care leavers were in education, training or employment on their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- This is lower performance than in 2012/13 when 55 out of 100 care leavers were in education, training or employment in 2012/13.
- Nationally 85 out of 100 young people aged 16-24 are in education, training or employment (Sep 2013)

#### COMMENTS:

- ❖ Performance improved slightly in 2012/13, but dipped to low performance in 2013/14.
- ❖ Current performance for 2013/14 suggests that just under half of those leaving care since April 2013 were in education, training or employment, some way behind the target of 67 out of 100.
- ❖ Young people feel that this isn't good enough and more young people should be in education or training

### CARE LEAVERS AT UNIVERSITY

- In 2011/12 there were 25 care leavers at university
- In 2012/13 there were a record 37 care leavers studying at university around the country, including 22 first year students. There were 7 graduates in 2012/13.
- In 2013/14 there are 36 care leavers studying at university including 13 first year students.
- Of the previous year's 22 first year students; 15 progressed to the second year, 1 completed with a one year foundation degree, 2 returned to repeat the first year, and 4 left their course.
- There are currently 8 students in their final year, hoping to graduate in 2013/14.



### COMMENTS:

- ❖ There is a good level of Care Leavers at University in each of the last two years showing that Leaving Care support is there for potential students.
- ❖ However there it is concerning that 2 in 10 first year students dropped out of university, and a further 1 in 10 repeated their first year. The decision to study at University must be an appropriate choice for the applicant and suitable students need to be well supported.
- ❖ Young people feel that these figures are not good enough and that many more care leavers should be going to university.



## Fostering

### Purpose of the report and Summary

This report has been completed at the request of the Corporate Parenting Board to provide statistical information about the numbers of foster carers who go on to care for children on a permanent basis and to provide a brief overview of Fostering for Adoption and Concurrent Placements.

### Key Information and Questions for Board Members

The following data is taken from the period 1.4.2013 to 31.3.2014;

- 5 Lancashire foster carers adopted the child in their care, a further 3 are in the process but orders have not been completed.
- 21 Lancashire foster carers took a Special Guardianship order on the child in their care.
- 39 Lancashire foster carers who had children placed on a short term basis agreed for those children to become permanent placements (58 children).

Concurrent placements;

- To date 13 children have been placed with 10 families.
- 3 of these children are now adopted.
- 1 unborn child is currently matched to be placed at birth.
- 2 additional families are due to be approved.

Fostering for Adoption;

- The first fostering for adoption placement has been identified and is due to take place imminently.

### Background

**Concurrent placements and fostering for adoption are more recent routes to the traditional path to adoption.**

### What is concurrent planning?

Concurrent planning for children aged 0 – 2 years aims to achieve permanent families for the most vulnerable young children in local authority care. The child is placed directly with concurrent carers, who are approved both as foster carers and

adopters whilst the Court makes a decision about the child's future. During this time the child's parents and sometimes other family members are assessed to see whether the child can be cared for and brought up within his/her own family. The child either returns home to their birth family, or is adopted by their concurrent carers.

If the Court decide that the birth parents are able to meet the needs of the child, concurrent carers will be involved in helping the child return to their birth family. Concurrent carers will have given the child the love and security that was needed as well as helping them to settle back with their family.

### **Advantages of Concurrent Planning for Children and Carers**

- Concurrent planning recognises the needs of very young children for stability and security
- It avoids the delay and repeated moves that young children can often experience in the care system
- It enables children to be placed earlier in a permanent family, whether this is with the birth family or concurrent carers who will become the child's adoptive family
- If the concurrent carers do adopt the child they have cared for, they will have the advantage of having cared for the child from a young age and they will be in a special position of knowing the child's birth parents and understanding their difficulties having met them during contact

### **Fostering for Adoption**

Fostering for Adoption is the most recent initiative to feature within the adoption system.

There are circumstances where it is appropriate and lawful to place a child with carers who are dually approved as adopters and foster carers during the period of temporary care and until the court makes a decision about the appropriate order by which the child's long term future is secured in the event that an order is necessary.

It is important to understand the differences between concurrency and Fostering for Adoption. Concurrent planning requires the identification and delivery of a a plan to return the child home while the child is placed with carers who are approved for both fostering and adoption and who support the plan. In the event the plan proves to be unsuccessful the foster carers can go on to adopt the child once care proceedings and the placement order application are completed.

In fostering for adoption the child must have a plan of adoption. The plan need not have been agreed before the court and or by the adoption agency decision maker. The plan therefore could be subject to change.

Under current law and regulations the local authority have responsibility for determining which foster carers the child is placed with until care proceedings and the placement order application is decided.

### **When would fostering for adoption be appropriate?**

There are a range of circumstances which may indicate that in planning for the child placing with carers who are approved for both adoption and fostering might be the best child-centred plan. It is essential that the local authority has fully explored its responsibilities to engage the birth parents and the wider family.

Where these have been explored and no options realistically identified then Fostering for Adoption may apply. Typically in one of the following circumstances:

- Where parents have had one or more children previously placed for adoption or other forms of permanence and their circumstances have not changed significantly.
- Where this is the first child the circumstances of the parents and the level of risk to the child are so profound there is no proactive plan to return the child to the birth parents or other family members.
- Where parents have indicated they may wish their child to be adopted but have not formally consented.

### **Decisions required**

The Corporate Parenting Board is asked to note the content. No decision is required.

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