

Lancashire County Council

Corporate Parenting Board

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 5th February, 2015 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 Ian Brown	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Chris Henig	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Sue Prynn	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Miss Kim Snape	- Lancashire County Council
Catherine Bob Stott	- representing Adoption - Director of Permanence, Protection and Schools
Mark Twiname	- Fostering Forum
Gavin	- LINX Representative
Kathryn	- LINX Representative
Kristal	- LINX Representative
Mark	- LINX Representative
Chloe	- LINX Representative

Co-opted members

Katherine Ashworth	- representing Young People's Service, Lancashire County Council
Mark Hudson	- or his representative, representing Independent Reviewing Officers
Debbie Ross	- Designated Nurse for CLA, representing CCG
Diane Booth	- Children's Social Care
Kate Baggaley	- Barnardos
Gareth Oates	- Barnardos
Annette McNeil	- Integrated Health Services

Other Attendees

Caroline Beswick	- Children's Society in Lancashire
Tracy Dixon	- CLA Health Services

Sam Gorton (Clerk)	- Governance Officer
Amanda Jakeman	- Department for Work and Pensions
Brendan Lee	- Residential Services

1. Introductions and Apologies

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

County Councillor Lord, Nicky Bamford and Jane Simpson.

2. Notes of the Meeting and Matters Arising from 4 December 2015

The notes from the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record and there were no matters arising from them.

3. What our Elected Members have been doing

CSE

County Councillor Prynne reported that she had met DCI Baxter on 16 December 2014 along with Bob Stott around Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). CC Prynne discussed the issue of reporting CSE intelligence. CC Prynne stated that several concerns had been raised by elected members concerning possible grooming of young people. She stated that although cases may have been reported through the usual police routes, there needed to be a more robust mechanism in place so that intelligence could be correlated over time to give a more holistic picture of what is happening throughout Lancashire. This would enable pieces of intelligence to be brought together – a bit like putting together a jigsaw- so that it would be less likely that incidents of grooming would ‘fall through the net’ or grooming patterns to go unnoticed. In keeping with this approach, if any potential CSE/grooming incidents/concerns were brought to the attention of the members of the Board during visits or through other activities, CC Prynne wished to be confident that there were clear reporting mechanisms in place to ensure their concerns would be logged and acted on by the police. A discussion followed, where DCI Baxter mentioned the difficulty the police face in logging ‘soft intelligence’ and that at present, there was no effective mechanism in place to record this type of intelligence. CC Prynne stated that she wished a protocol to be set up as she felt this was unacceptable. It was agreed that a system would initially be set up whereby any ‘soft intelligence’ which came to attention of CPB Board Members would be reported to the CPB Chair who would then report such information to DCI Baxter. This information would then be passed by DCI Baxter to the relevant, regional CSE teams to be acted on. DCI Baxter also stated that he would be looking into more sustainable mechanisms in the future to record ‘soft intelligence’. This is felt to be a real breakthrough for the Board and a welcome way forward.

CC Prynne stated that she had discussed with the Director of Children's Services the need to review current LCC policies connected to CSE/safeguarding in terms of their appropriateness and functionality i.e. fitness for purpose and effectiveness. Meetings had been set up with Bob Stott and several officers to take this forward.

Following on from this, CC Prynne had received an update from Bob Stott regarding a meeting held on 14 January 2015 on how schools look at CSE in PHSE lessons.

Evaluation

CC Prynne informed the Board of her recent involvement in strategies to increase the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the CPB. As part of this work, self evaluation forms had been devised and completed to indicate the main priorities/goals of the Board alongside how well actions taken by members and officers have helped to achieve them.

Secondly, an online survey had been devised to ascertain how well Board members felt the CPB Chair and Corporate Parenting Board was working. This was found to be a very fruitful exercise and thanks was given to those people who had completed the survey; elected members, young people from LINX and officers. It was noted that feedback had been given to CC Prynne and comments would be noted and taken forward.

Participation

CC Prynne attended a LINX meeting and the Annual Review for the Barnardos contract on 27 February 2015. It was pleasing to see that participation had increased, particularly for primary aged children. Discussions took place as to how to further increase participation. CC Prynne mentioned how she had set officers the task of looking into the feasibility of all looked after children having their own email addresses. CC Prynne is expecting an update from officers shortly on options available. It was felt this would greatly aid participation.

Action: CC Prynne to report back at the next meeting, re the outcome.

CPB Joint Conferences

The Chair of the LSCB, Jane Booth met with CC Prynne, Bob Stott and Sam Gorton on 4 February 2015 where it was agreed that they would look at holding a joint event with the LSCB in July around "Young People Feeling Safe". A working group is to be set up by Jane to look at taking this forward. Further updates will come back to this meeting.

Education

CC Prynne expressed how the Board's concerns around the education and performance figures for CLA across Lancashire, particularly in writing, had been taken forward.

CC Prynne had now referred the matter to LCC Education Scrutiny Committee to ensure a thorough review alongside informing the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools. The issue has also been referred to the Cabinet Committee for Performance Improvement (CCPI) for full consideration.

Adoption/Activity Days

The Board was updated on a meeting this week between officers and the DfE regarding adoption data. There are national targets set in order to increase the number of children looked after who are adopted. As such, the DfE continually monitors Local Authorities as to how well they are meeting these targets by monitoring their adoption register.

Recently, 44 children/young people were taken off the adoption register and given long term placements as they had been found to be difficult to place for a variety of reasons. This was felt, by officers, to be in the child's best interest. Such officer actions instigated a visit by the DfE who wished to know why LCC officers had taken children off the register as it went against the targets. A meeting was held with the DfE. The officers; Diane Booth, Barbara Bath and Stasia Osiowy, explained their reasoning for the actions taken. It was very pleasing to note that the officers were successful in changing the opinion of the DfE representatives, so much so that the DfE has now asked Lancashire CC to be part of the North West Regional Adoption Board. CC Prynne congratulated the officers on their success and commitment to the children and young people in their care.

Restructure

An overview was given by Bob Stott, into the new roles that Senior Officers will be undertaking from 1 April 2015 in Start Well as part of Phase 1 of the Transformation of the County Council (there will no longer be any Directorates within the Authority ie Children and Young People's, Adult Services, Public Health and Wellbeing).

Bob Stott – Director of Children's Services

Tony Morrissey – Deputy Director of Children's Services

Brendan Lee – Head of Special Educational Needs and Disability

Stasia Osiowy – Head of Safeguarding, Inspection and Audit

Diane Booth – Head of Children's Social Care

Barbara Bath – Head of Adoption, Fostering, YOT and Residential

Jonathan Hewitt – Head of School Improvement

Ajay Sethay – Head of Traded Services

Tony Pounder – Director of Adult Services

Thank You

Mark Hudson, Senior IRO, was thanked by the Chair on behalf of the Board, for all the work he has done over his 32 years of service with LCC. Mark will be leaving the Authority at the end of March and therefore this would be last meeting.

Reports from Other Elected Members

County Councillor Henig has been visiting libraries in Skelmersdale, where young people have been learning about understanding dementia. There is a Memory Festival that is taking place across the county in libraries over the next two weeks. More information can be found on the Lancashire Libraries website.

A positive opportunity is being offered to families in Lancaster whose relatives have severe disabilities. It is an initiative called Books on Prescription and libraries will offer home visiting. If successful then this will be rolled out across the County.

County Councillor Beavers did a Regulation 22 visit to The Links, Fleetwood and was very impressed by it. A report will be submitted from the visit shortly.

PROUD Awards

County Councillor Prynne reminded all Elected Members that the PROUD Awards were taking place on 6 March 2015 and that they were all invited to attend.

4. New Care Leavers Strategy

Amanda Jakeman (DWP) was welcomed to the meeting. She spoke about the new strategy that was in place and how it affected care leavers. The Care Leaver can make contact with Job Centre Plus four weeks prior to their 18th birthday about work and education as they are entitled to full benefits if in full-time education also. Depending on the benefit claim ie Universal Credit or Jobseekers Allowance it can be fortnightly or monthly. Amanda reinforced that when the young people attended for interviews, they need to be as open and honest about their situation from the start, so that they can have access to the best entitlements for them. Additional support is available for care leavers and anybody who supports the young person is also urged to attend if they are asked. Care leavers are given a named adviser so they feel more comfortable and get used to speaking to the same person each time they go along. Links are being forged with the Local Authority and partnerships are continually building.

With regards benefit sanctions, Amanda stated that there are no targets set but individuals have to be open and honest if they cannot actively seek employment. If a sanction is put in place, then it is followed up within 48 hours for a face to face meeting.

Amanda informed the Board that vulnerable customers are a high priority for them, and daily updates and weekly meetings ensure constant reminders to their staff in addition to updated strategies such as the Care Leavers one.

Discussions ensued around the above and CC Prynne asked for reassurance that all Welfare Benefit officers would be aware of the DWP support available for care leavers and would be able to identify and advise care leavers accordingly.

Moving on from this CC Prynne invited Amanda to form further links with LINX in order to develop strategies to further improve care leavers experience of the benefits system.

Action: Amanda agreed to attend LINX and possible report back to the CPB at a later date on her discussions.

Diane Booth asked if there was a young person friendly version of the strategy so it could sit on LCC's website for Care Leavers.

Action: Amanda agreed to look into this and feedback on the suggestion of a young person friendly version.

Action: Amanda to send Sam copies of leaflets/information that can go on the LCC website for Care Leavers.

Amanda was thanked for attending the meeting and if anybody wishes to contact her further regarding any information from this meeting, please email: AMANDA.JAKEMAN@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK.

5. LINX (Lancashire's Children in Care Council)

LINX informed the Board as to what they had been doing since the last meeting in December. Please see attached powerpoint.

Feedback on the Performance Report was received and comments were noted and will be passed back to the relevant officers for action. Please see attached report with comments.

The Young Inspectors programme is working well and these will help Elected Members when they carry out their own Regulation 22 visits as they can generate questions from the Young Inspectors reports to aide theirs.

LINX have been involved with a project called "Fixers – Stereotyping Children in Care". Mark and Callum were involved in a full day filming for this and it is due to be aired on Granada Reports on 5 March 2015. They are going to revisit LINX in April.

Action: A copy of the film is to be shown at the next CPB meeting.

Elected Members and Officers were invited to attend the Passport 2 Parliament event on 20 February 2015 (details attached). There is one place available and if anybody would like to attend, to let Kate know, email kate.baggaley@barnardos.org.uk.

The young people then led an activity on care plans. The activity is attached for information.

Kat updated the Board on the PROUD awards preparation. Powerpoint is attached.

6. Regulation 22 Visits

Brendan Lee gave feedback from the Regulation 22 visits that Elected Members have done over the past six months. The powerpoint is attached for further information.

Due to the confidentiality of the reports, a separate report will be sent to CC Prynne and Bob Stott following up on the visits undertaken.

Unit Managers are asked to share the reports from their homes with the young people residing there. It was noted that a key question for the Young Inspectors to ask at their visits is "Are they receiving feedback from the Regulation 22 and 33 visits?"

Action: Kate Baggaley to speak with the Young Inspectors about using the additional question for their visits.

Brendan indicated that these visits were really helpful and a powerful tool and shows that they are working and comments are being taken on board.

7. Junior ISAs

Mark Hudson introduced the Junior ISA's presentation (as attached) and informed the Board that awareness needs to be greater around them. The child needs to have been in care a year to benefit from an ISA, therefore if they come into care when they are 17 years old and one day, they would not qualify as the ISA is received on the young person's 18th birthday.

If a child dies whilst in care, then the beneficiary is their next of kin which is usually a birth parent and the same goes for criminal injury compensation. Foster carers in this case are reluctant to top up the ISA. If LCC has a care order with a legal agreement, they may be able to interfere and stop the payment being made to the next of kin. Mark Hudson has contacted Peter Hollebhone, Legal Services, for further clarification.

Action: Diane Booth agreed to look into this further and feedback at the next meeting.

Dependant on the outcome of the information sought from Legal, the Board may look at raising the concern around the birth parent being the beneficiary and raise it locally/nationally and inform the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools.

There is lots of information on the www.sharefound.org website on Junior ISA's.

Any issues around this area, contact can be made with Mark Hudson for the next six weeks, email mark.hudson@lancashire.gov.uk.

8. Virtual Schools and Governance

This item was deferred to the next meeting when the new Headteacher for Vulnerable and Looked After Children, Audrey Swann, will be in attendance.

9. Lancashire Questionnaire Summary

The results of the survey carried out by Ofsted were attached to the agenda. Key messages around bullying and feeling safe will be picked up with the services involved.

Debbie Ross and Diane Booth are introducing a strengths and difficulties questionnaire and this will be given to CLA around 20 days after coming into care.

Concern was raised regarding question 11 around complaints being taken seriously and dealt with properly to which Diane Booth responded that a report had been received that day stating that a lot of CLA do not know how to complain or indeed compliment. A leaflet has been developed with lots of information that will be given as soon as a child comes into care, including how to complain. This will also go on the CLA website and will be built in for keyworkers in Residential settings.

Caroline Beswick from The Children's Society said that they have been in consultation with the Customer Feedback Team and are currently piloting having advocates in four of the Residential Homes to raise awareness and offer support in this area. If this is successful, they will look to roll this out across more Residential settings.

10. Activity Day Briefing Report

A report from the last Activity Day held on 5 October 2015 was attached to the agenda and the Board were delighted to hear that out of the 27 children that attended, 25 were matched with adopters. The two children that were not matched because of their specific needs only have a limited understanding of the purpose of the days. Members requested information around the welfare of children who had not been selected. Officers stated that the Social Worker and Foster Carers had supported them following the day, along with the IRO and it was evident that they had fun on the day. County Councillor Ian Brown had

reported at the last meeting in December how he felt the day had gone, and that he had enjoyed being a part of it. The Board felt the numbers matched were extremely impressive and that the figures indicated the success of the event. It was noted that the way in which the CPB had monitored and evaluated the Activity Days at various stages of the process, was a good example of the Board exercising its scrutinising function. This was felt to be especially important for the Authority in cases where practices, such as activity days, had been considered to be controversial by some. The Board will continue to monitor these events in the future.

In terms of the next day on 11 July 2015:

Action: The Elected Members will meet up outside this meeting to discuss how they wish to take it forward.

11. Executive Summary: CLA Sufficiency & Commissioning Effective Placements Strategy 2014-2017

Bob Stott introduced the strategy that LCC has put in place for 2014-2017, and what it has in place for children and young people over the next three years. A lot of the topics that have been raised at CPB are included in the strategy.

Action: To report back on the action plan every 3-6 months.

12. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

13. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday, 23 April 2015 at 6.00pm in the Duke of Lancaster Room (formerly Cabinet Room 'C', County Hall, Preston, PR1 8RJ.

Information Items

These items were not discussed at the meeting as they are for information only. Any issues arising from them, please forward to Sam Gorton, Clerk to the CPB who will forward to the relevant Elected Members/Officers.

14. LSCB Annual Report

15. LADO Report

