

Lancashire County Council

Corporate Parenting Board

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 18th June, 2015 at 6.00 pm in
Cabinet Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston**

Present: Members

County Councillor Sue Pryn (Chair)	- 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 Dorothy Lord	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Julie Gibson	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Cynthia Dereli	- Lancashire County Council
Catherine Lynsey Evans	- representing Adoption - Fostering Forum
Mark Twiname	- Fostering Forum
Tony Morrissey	- Deputy Director, Children's Services
Sam W	- LINX Representative
Gavin Bradley	- LINX Representative
Kristal	- LINX Representative
Paige	- LINX Representative

Co-opted members

Nicola Bamford	- Designated Doctor and Consultant Paediatrician, representing CCG
Diane Booth	- Children's Social Care
Kate Baggaley	- Barnardos
Audrey Swann	- Headteacher, Vulnerable and Looked After Children
Amanda Mansfield	- Independent Reviewing Officers
Naomi Burgess	- Barnardos
Rebecca Wilkinson	- Barnardos

Other Attendees

County Councillor	- Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools (left at 6.30pm)
Matthew Tomlinson	
Caroline Beswick	- Lancashire Children's Rights Service
Annette McNeil	- Integrated Health Service
Lisa Dorrington	- Blackpool Trust Hospitals
Sam Gorton (Clerk)	- Legal and Democratic Services

1. Introductions and Apologies

All were welcomed to the meeting, especially County Councillors Dereli and Gibson who were substituting for County Councillors Snape and Beavers. Apologies were noted from Debbie Ross and Debbie Duffell.

2. Appointment of Chair

The Board noted that County Councillor Sue Prynne had been appointed as the Chair of the Board for the 2015/2016 Municipal year.

3. Appointment of Deputy Chair

The Board noted that County Councillor Margaret Brindle had been appointed as Deputy Chair of the Board for the 2015/2016 Municipal year. It was also noted that County Councillor Brindle was also the Chairman of Lancashire County Council 2015/2016.

4. Terms of Reference, Membership and Constitution

The Board undertook an activity on the current Terms of Reference around whether they felt that it was achieving what it states and whether there were any other points that needed to be added. The activity and the results are attached.

5. Notes of the Meeting and Matters Arising from 23 April 2015

The notes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record. There were no matters arising.

6. What our Elected Members have been doing

The County Councillors present highlighted a number of areas of their recent work since the Board last met.

County Councillor (CC) Prynne stated that housing for care leavers has been a focus and is looking to set up/form a partnership with the District Councils. The Preston City Council has already done some work and the Local Authority is working with a project called "New Belongings" to look at Lancashire services to care leavers.

Action: The CPB to have care leavers as a thematic area for a future meeting and New Belongings along with others to be invited to a future meeting.

CC Prynne had recently been contacted by a young person and an issue had arisen from a care leaver who was due to move into supported accommodation. CC Prynne along with the care worker visited the property to ensure it was fit for purpose and reiterated that as a Corporate Parent we have to be certain that the young person is ready to move into supported accommodation and they are confident and everything is in place for them to do this before they move in. Communication is key with that young person. CC Prynne is happy for officers to contact her direct, should issues arise.

An Out of Borough visit in Blackpool had been carried out by CC Prynne to one of the Hexagon Care Service Units. It was reported that the staff were fantastic and the home was spacious with chillout rooms. The visit was positive and CC Prynne was assured by the good care being provided.

Action: CC Prynne will write the reports for these visits and circulate to the relevant people.

CC Prynne outlined that she had met with Jane Booth the Lancashire Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) Chair as agreed as there was a previous proposal to hold a joint conference. Following discussion it was felt it would be more innovative to hold two Challenge Panels in late September where the Panel will consist of young people, CC Prynne, Jane Booth (Chair of LSCB) and relevant officers. The aim is to find out how safe our young people feel being in care (safeguarding).

CC Prynne attended the Barnardos Contract Monitoring meeting and feedback had been given on the Young Inspectors programme and how well this was working. Credit was given to Kate Baggaley, Barnardos and the young people on the success of the programme.

CC Brindle gave an update on various events she had attended in her new role as Chairman of the County Council. One event was the launch of the Fostering Fortnight, and is eagerly awaiting feedback following this. Another was a visit to Burnley College, to the Creative Arts and Media Department where CC Brindle asked about care leavers and how they were supported and she has agreed to keep in touch with them regarding this.

Recently the Chairman's Challenge was attended by 17 schools, and St Augustine's RC High School gave an impressive presentation on child sexual exploitation and how they are promoting awareness throughout other schools. This is something that this group could take forward. A link to the film can be found [here](#).

CC Brown reported on his recent Regulation 22 visit to Crestmoor which was very positive.

CC Lord reported on her visit to Buckingham Palace as a representative from LCC and visited the Houses of Parliament and Commons. She said it was a wonderful opportunity to talk to young people about politics.

CC Henig stated she had recently visited Archives which was 75 years old in April and been to London also looking at Arts and Culture. CC Henig had also been involved in the Young People's Book of the Year competition.

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

LINX updated the Board on their recent activities that they had been involved in since the last meeting was held in April. A number of presentations were shown and these are attached to these notes.

The Board asked for further information on the Barnardos Big Conversation which had been held at Woodlands. 26 young people from Lancashire were involved and every activity was related to Barnardos and what went well and what Barnardos could do better. The Director of Barnardos was in attendance and was very impressed with the young people.

ITV Fixers are working with LINX on another campaign, in the form of an animated film to raise awareness for children in years 6/7 around children looked after and changing their negative attitude towards them. Hopefully this will be available for the September meeting.

The young people have devised a flyer around the Young Inspectors Programme and this was felt to be an excellent piece of work, in informing other young people on why they are carrying out the visits and what they want to achieve from doing the visits and the benefits.

A number of comments were raised as indicated on the Performance report attached.

Action: Officers to note the comments and feedback as necessary to LINX.

Audrey Swann reported that they are looking at having a Governing Body for the Virtual School and would like young people to be a part of that. She would also like them to be involved in the Designated Teacher Training also.

A KS4 conference is to be held on 22 October and CLA representatives from across Lancashire are invited to attend. The conference will be looking at raising the attainment levels for CLA.

Audrey also commented on the Pupil Premium and that schools are starting use the extra pupil premium funding that is also available and that Pupil Premium is emphasised when training designated teachers in how and what it should be used for.

8. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

9. Date and Time of Next Meeting

This is the young person led meeting on Thursday, 30 July 2015 at 1.30pm, in the Henry Bollinbroke Room (formerly Cabinet Room 'D'), County Hall, Preston, PR1 8RJ.

Corporate Parenting Board Activity

On your tables please look at the terms of reference and say whether you think we have achieved what we wanted to do?

Where possible can you give examples/evidence on how we have achieved them?

Can you also look at the Co-opted Membership list and see if there are any that you would want to attend every meeting or if there is anyone you think we should invite that is not on the list.

Can you look at whether there are any particular themes you would want to look at in more detail?

Results from the Terms of Reference Activity

Flipchart 1

- TOR 1** Needs to be there, but more work needed.
- TOR 2** We are doing this – questions young people as re outcomes.
- TOR 3** As above – linked to outcomes – how does this work in practice? eg happiness/wellbeing – is this information collated?
- TOR 4** This is getting better!
- TOR 5** On each agenda.
- TOR 6** Reg 22, young inspectors etc. What is secure estate?
- TOR 7** Don't understand wording.
- TOR 8** PROUD event.

Flipchart 2

Do well:

- Listen to voice of CLA.
- TOR 4 – strong contribution from LINX – CYP steer what is discussed. CYP feel listened to. Young inspectors.
- Celebrating of achievements of CLA – through meetings and PROUD event.
- Way LINX gets key performance information for Health and Wellbeing and education in advance of meeting and provide comment/challenge at the meeting.

Could do more on:

- Themes.
- Specific provision and services – fits in with themes idea.
- Care leavers theme would be useful, particularly housing.

Possible Co-opted Members not currently represented on the Board

- Police, housing work and pension – themes again may support this better.
- Further education, Schools
- Care Leavers organisations (Care Leavers Association – possible speaker available via CC Dorothy Lord).
- Advocacy Service – another opportunity to raise issues from CLA.

Flipchart 3

Do well

1. Proud event
2. Adoption activity days
3. Monthly performance
4. Inspections residential homes, independent and in-house
5. Young inspectors group
6. Health and wellbeing – health assessments
7. Pupil premium
8. Staying put
9. DWP – care leavers

Could do more on:

- Training
- Jobs
- Housing
- Care leavers
- Social media

Possible Co-opted Members not currently represented on the Board

- Schools
- College



What LINX Have Been Doing.....





April 2015

2 members attend
Children's Rights
Alliance for England
Residential

2 members
attend
Amplify
Birmingham
Meeting

2 members attend
16-25 Locality
Participation
Meeting

Young Inspectors
visit private
Fostering Agency

2 members attend
PULSE
Lancashire's Young
People's Health and
Well Being Board

April 2015 continued

Primary Activity Day in
partnership with the
Children's Rights Alliance
for England

3 members attend Interview
panel for Social Work
Manager in Burnley

1 member attends
UCLAN Social
Pedagogy Course
over 5 weeks

2 members
attend
Amplify
Residential
Meeting

members
complete
Children's
Rights
Consultation
Questionnaire



May 2015

Barnardo's North West
Regional Director
Lynn Perry Interview

Annual Lancashire
Participation Meeting

Care Leavers
Forum Event in
Birmingham

Secondary LINX
and POWAR
Residential
Weekend in the
Lake District

Barnardo's
Big
Conversation
Event



May Continued 2015

Primary Activity Day at
Walton le Dale Youth
Centre

2 members attend PULSE
meeting

2 members attend
Lancashire Youth
Council

Office of
Children's
Commissioners
Website Project



June 2015

Members of LINX facilitate
Barnardo's Understands
Diversity and Inclusion
Conference

1 member of LINX attends 2
X Factor Auditions in London

Young Inspectors
visit to Private
Fostering Agency

16-25 Locality
Participation Meeting



June 2015

LINX complete Lancashire Youth Council Consultation Questionnaire

2 Members had a meeting with ITV Fixers to plan film about CLA.

Helped create a training package for 'Stories to Connect with'

1 member attended CRAE(Childrens Rights Alliance for England) Steering group



Children Looked After Young Inspectors Update June 2015



June 2015

There are currently 11 trained members of the Children Looked After Young Inspectors Team.

The Young Inspectors visit

- fostering agencies
- Lancashire County Council residential units
- Private residential units

In May a Report was sent to a Private Residential Unit with the following recommendations.....



To continue to build on relations with the local community.

To continue to promote and improve participation with the young people and continue to encourage them to join groups and clubs which develop their confidence and self-esteem.

To continue with the positive atmosphere and ethos of the home and to promote its mission statement.

June 2015

In June a Report was sent to a Private Residential Unit with the following recommendations.....



Review ALL policies to make sure that participation is embedded into everything and that policies are followed.

To include young people in the training and appointment system for new foster carers and staff.

To ensure that all young people know they are being listened to through regular feedback on issues which have been raised.

In June we visited a private fostering agency and the report is currently being written.

We have confirmed a date to revisit the Lancashire County Council Residential Unit in July

We have dates to visit a number of private residential units throughout July and August.



Some recent Feedback from Young people involved in the inspections is that they would like to understand the process a little better before the visit takes place as the word 'Inspectors' makes young people feel anxious about the visit.



LINX are working on a flyer that can be sent to young people before the visit takes place so that they know what to expect and this will hopefully make them feel less anxious about the process.



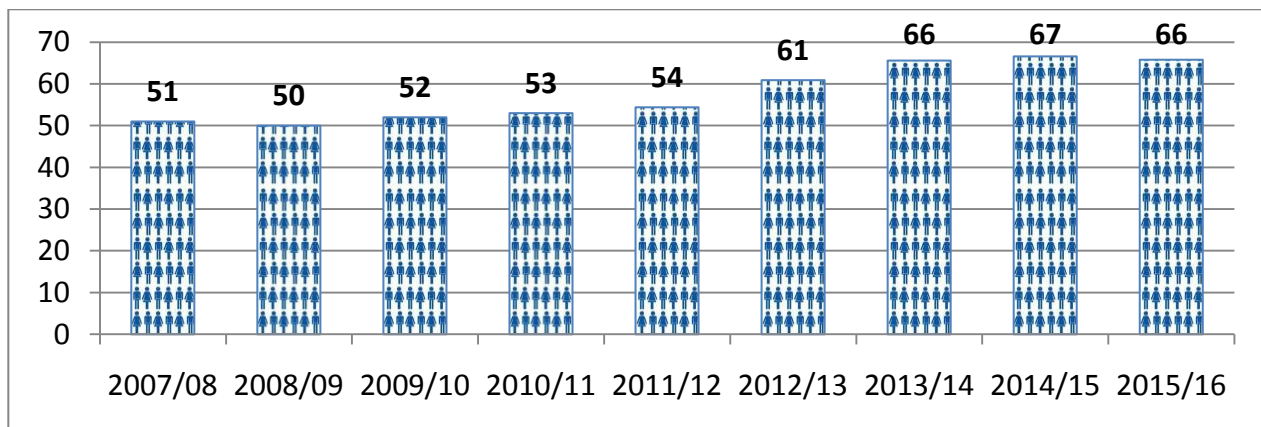
CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD PERFORMANCE REPORT, JUNE 2015

Lancashire changed its integrated children's system from ISSIS to LCS in February 2014; this has an on-going impact on the ability to report accurate performance, as such some information given below is subject to change.

ACTIVITY FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AND CARE LEAVERS

NUMBER OF CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER

- As at the end of April 2015, there are **1,606** children looked after in Lancashire.
- For every **10,000** children and young people in Lancashire, **66** are currently looked after.
- The current number of children looked after is the lowest it has been since September 2014.
- There are **more** children looked after in Lancashire than in England where 60 out of 10,000 are currently looked after and more than in Lancashire's statistical neighbours (61 out of 10,000).
- There are **less** children looked after in Lancashire than the North West (81 out of 10,000).



COMMENTS:

- ❖ Lancashire's number of children looked after has decreased in April. There have been big increases in the number of looked after children over the last two years. The rate increased slightly in the last year to 67 per 10,000.
- ❖ Lancashire's number of children looked after is higher than that of Lancashire's statistical neighbours and the national average but lower than the average of other North West local authorities.
- ❖ Lancashire's statistical neighbours are Bury, Calderdale, Derbyshire, Kent, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Sefton, Staffordshire, Stockport & Stockton-on-Tees..

SERVICE ACTIVITY

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

- The contact centre has received **less** referrals than in previous years, although **more** contacts.
- A referral is information received regarding a child that is deemed to require social care involvement. A contact is any information received that doesn't lead to a referral.



- The social work teams have moved from initial and core assessments to a new single assessment from 1st April 2014.

	Previous Performance				Current Performance
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16 (Apr)
Contacts <i>per month</i>	1284	1525	750	1575	1636
Referrals <i>per month</i>	1175	1370	1679	868	756
Initial Assessments	9891	11288	11865	-	
Core Assessments	5019	5901	5724	-	
Single Assessment <i>per month</i>	--	--	--	1088	1020

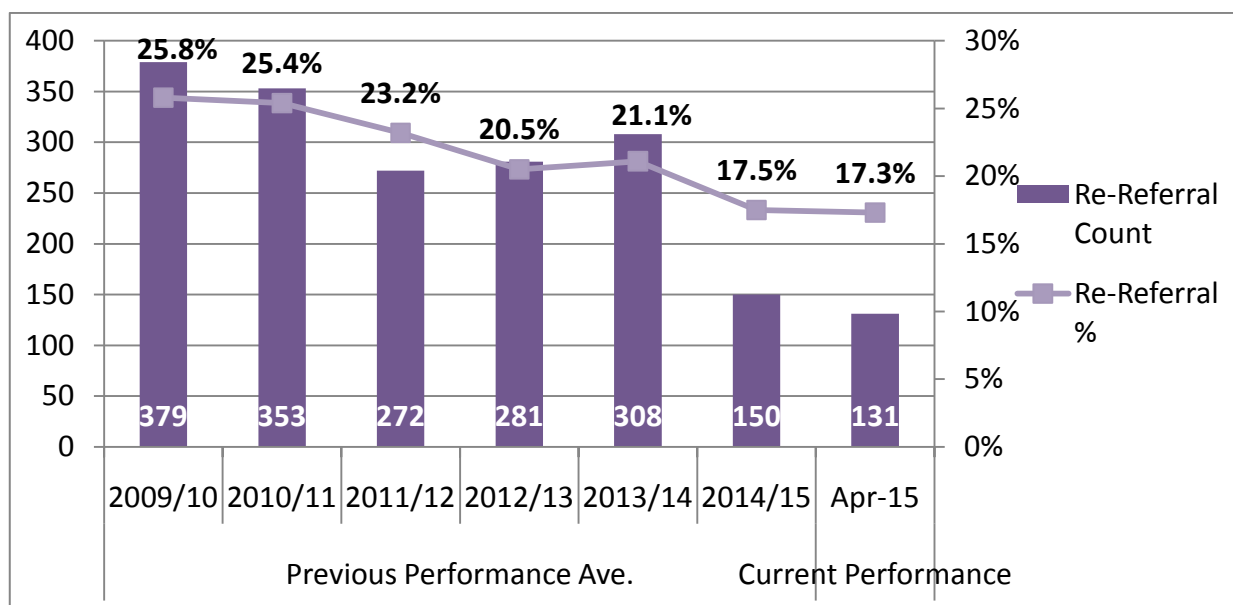
COMMENTS:

- ❖ 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.
- ❖ From 1st April 2014, contacts and referrals were counted differently hence the number of contacts are not comparable to previous years.
- ❖ From 1st April 2014 initial and core assessments were discontinued and the new single assessment was introduced. The first year shows an average of 1088 assessments started per month.
- ❖ A focus on early intervention could explain the rise in contacts but the reduction in referrals.

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
- Average re-referral rate for 2014/15 decreased to **less than 18** re-referrals out of each 100 referrals received.



COMMENTS:

- ❖ The re-referral rate has been calculated differently since LCS went live in 2014/15 hence the large decrease.
- ❖ The re-referrals rate for referrals that lead to a single assessment is **17.3%** in April 2015, in line with the 2014/15 average.
- ❖ Re-referral rates have stayed below **20%** for the over 12 months.

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 for April 2015 shows that just over **6** out of 100 children looked after have moved twice or more which is good performance and within the target.
- This is also a slight improvement on last year's performance of 6.8% and a big improvement on 2013/14 when **9** out of 100 children looked after had to move twice or more during the year.

Previous Performance			Current Performance	Target	Performance Direction?
2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16		
8.7%	9.5%	6.8%	6.4%	9.5%	😊
↘	↗	↘	↘	✓	

COMMENTS:

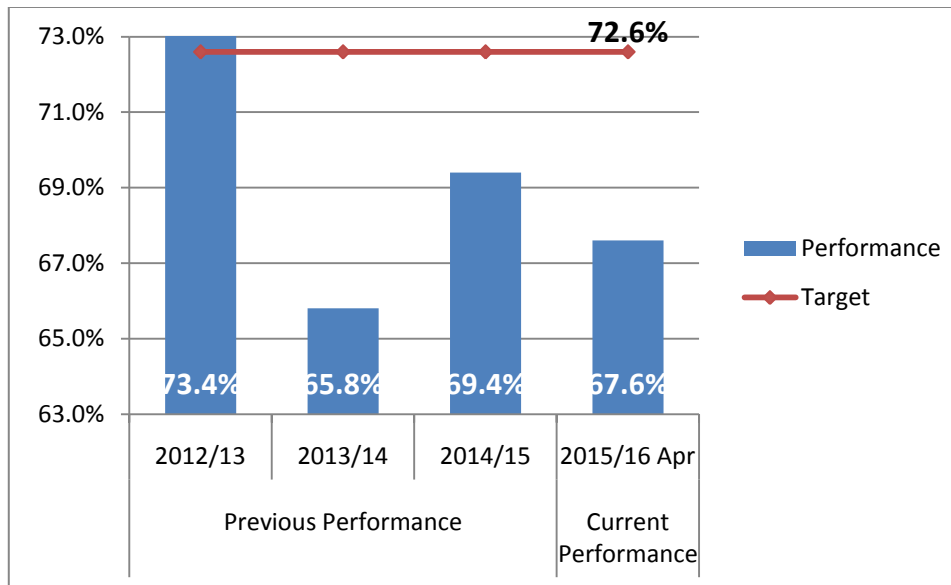
- ❖ Lancashire has carried out good placement stability work through research projects and improved processes, which has resulted in better performance and improved stability.
- ❖ Fewer children than ever have more than 2 placement moves.
- ❖ Young people are happy that this is less than last year however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

- ❖ Young people are happy that the number has reduced but feel that placements could be better researched to suit the needs of the young person which may reduce moves.
- ❖ Young people are happy that the figure is low and that the target has been met, however they would like current performance to further improve.

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 at least two years in their current placement.
- April 2015 information shows that almost **68** out of 100 children looked are in a long and stable placement, which is good performance, but below our target.
- Current performance is above 2013/14 performance of **66** out of 100, but slightly below last year's performance (**69** out of 100).



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.
- ❖ 2014/15 performance improved from the previous year but remains below the target of **72.6%**. This has gradually improved throughout the year from **65.8%** in March 2014.
- ❖ Young people are happy that this figure has improved recently but wonder what more can be done to improve placement stability as the target has not been met.

CHILDREN MISSING FROM CARE

Lancashire County Council and its partners are changing processes for children missing from care, and there will be a new protocol whereby young people are not reported missing straight away in case they are just running late. Also the Police will now be able to change missing to absent on the young person's record.

Lancashire County Council works with multiple agencies including Lancashire Police, to monitor the levels of children missing from care and this year's information is below:

	2013/14	2014/15
Lancashire CLA missing	355	361
Number CLA from other LAs missing	355	365
Other Children known to Lancashire CSC	408	764
Other Children Missing	1338	742
Children Missing with Lancashire boundaries	2456	2222

COMMENT:

- ❖ Over the whole year, **22** out of 100 children looked after were reported missing in 2014/15, the same figure as the previous year.
- ❖ The numbers represent the number of children looked after, and some children have multiple instances of going missing
- ❖ LINX have welcomed the changing protocols for children missing and feel this is good and that they are listened to, however are worried about those individuals that do actually go missing.

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?
	10/11	11/12	12/13	2013/14		
Lancs	11.9%	12.9%	12.9%	8%	18.0%	😊
	↘	↗	➡	↘	✘	
England	11.6%	12.8%	15.7%	Not available	Higher	☹️

COMMENT:

- ❖ In Lancashire, attainment at GCSE among the children looked after remained stable in 2012/13, but reduced in 2013/14 with **8** out of 100 CLA achieving 5 A*-C including English and Maths.


- ❖ Across England in 2012/13, just over **15** per 100 children looked after achieved 5 A*-C inc. English & Maths, slightly more than Lancashire's **13** per 100.
- ❖ The young people were shocked at these statistics and suggested the following reasons as to why this may be:
 - CLA are pulled out of lessons by social workers. Meetings may also run over and as such CLA are missing too much time from their lessons. One young person missed an exam due to this and did not receive an apology which upset them.
 - The young people suggested that if staff have to visit them whilst in school, to plan better in terms of meeting the young person on a break or at lunch time. It was also suggested that it may better suit the young person better to be removed from certain lessons if they are confident or feel that they're ahead within the lesson.
 - The stress of placement moves, which sometimes require a change in school, was also highlighted. Due to the nature of schools covering parts of the curriculum at different times of the year, those moving schools may miss vital parts of the syllabus.
 - Young people would like additional tutors to be made available in children's homes and for those children that are fostered. Looked after children should be entitled to additional support where school moves occur.
- ❖ Young people believe the target performance for CLA achieving 5 GCSEs at A* - C should be 100%. They feel that children undertaking other courses would mean that this wouldn't be attainable, therefore those completing other courses and qualifications should also be included.
- ❖ Whilst the above is a good idea to include the results obtained by children undertaking alternative education, this performance indicator is calculated in this manner as it is a national indicator and all authorities are required to provide information on those achieving 5 GCSEs, including 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 above target in 2013/14 with all children looked after only missing **4** out of every 100 sessions in school
- Attendance in secondary school was better than last year, with all children looked after missing **5** out of every 100 sessions possible in school.
- There are two sessions possible each school day; a morning session and an afternoon session. If a child is absent for a lesson in either they are deemed as absent.

	Previous Performance			Current Performance	Target	Performance Direction?
	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14		
Primary	96.3%	96.2%	97.0%	97.2%	96.0%	

	↗	↘	↗	↗	↗	
Secondary	92.5%	94.3%	92.0%	95.0%	96.0%	
	↘	↗	↘	↗	x	

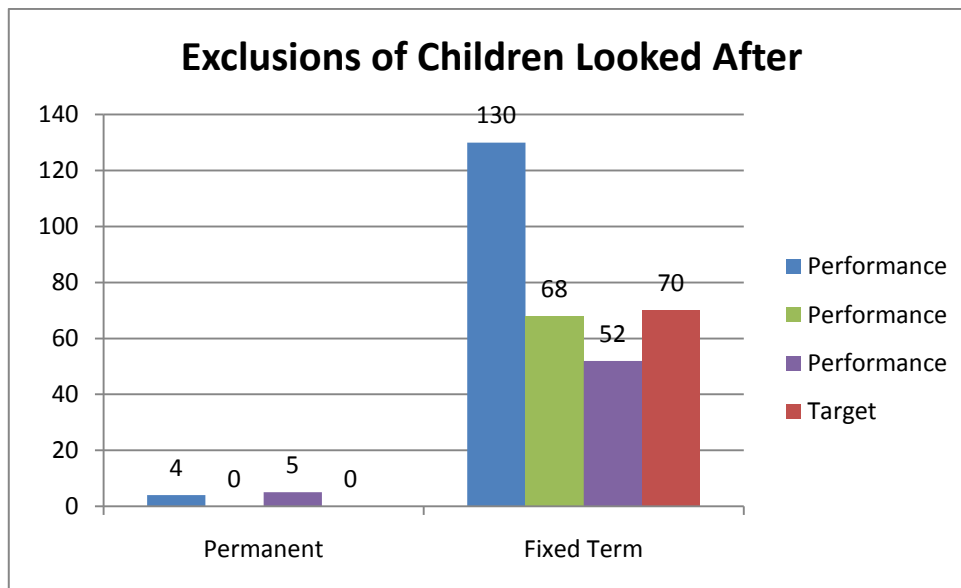
COMMENTS:

- ❖ Young people feel that the lower performance for secondary school pupils are a reflection of the increased age of these pupils and the free will exerted by those who are older leading them to miss school. The stress of placement moves and of being in care were also cited as reasons for non-attendance, particularly in those secondary school age children and young people.
- ❖ Young people feel that they should be able to choose what they do at school, for example, completing exams or doing practical courses and perhaps going to college earlier than usual to start these courses.
- ❖ Young people believe CLA could be marked as absent from a lesson if they are attending a CLA meeting instead, which is not necessarily the young person's fault. If the young person does not attend for the morning/afternoon, this would be classed as an absent, but potentially authorised, session.
- ❖ Young people feel that sometimes young people withdraw themselves from lessons if they are not able to cope and speak to their designated teacher or someone they feel comfortable talking to.

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 **5** permanent exclusions of children looked after, an increase from 0 the previous year.
- In the last year there were **52** fixed term exclusions of children looked after, down from **68** the previous year – both lower than the target of **70**, which is good!
- The number of fixed term exclusions has fallen again and is well within the targets set by the Corporate Parenting Board. However, there were a number of permanent exclusions within the last year which means, unlike last year, the target of zero permanent exclusions has not been met.



COMMENTS:

- ❖ 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?
- ❖ Young people would like to know why the target of 0 permanent exclusions has not yet been met. The target of 0 was met as recently as 2012/13 however 5 looked after children were permanently excluded in 2013/14.
- ❖ LINX would like to know the reasons for the 5 permanent exclusions in 2013/14.

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, **8** as at 30th April 2015.
- Just under 3 out of **100** children looked after are involved with the youth offending teams, while just over **1** out of **1000** children and young people are involved with youth offending teams.
- Based on these figures, children looked after are twenty one times more likely to be involved with youth offending teams than those not looked after.

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

- **87** out of 100 children looked after have an up-to-date health assessment (April 2015)
- This is the same level of up-to-date health assessments than in the previous year (2014/15 - 87)
- **73** out of 100 children looked after have an up-to-date dental assessment (April 2015)
- This is the lowest level of up-to-date dental assessments in the year for over 12 months

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.
- ❖ Lancashire is currently focusing on improving the timeliness of health assessments in partnership with health colleagues.
- ❖ Young people feel that the percentage of those with an up-to-date health assessment should be higher – somewhere between 90% and 95%.
- ❖ Young people feel that they should be given a choice as to whether they want a health assessment or not. Young people should only be made to have one if there is a cause for concern. Young people feel health assessments should be different for each individual. Also, if a young person has a check up at the doctors, this should be counted as a health assessment.
- ❖ Young people also feel that health assessments need to be confidential as in the past some LINX members have had foster carers in the assessments which can be uncomfortable when they are being asked personal questions.
- ❖ Young people asked whether health and dental assessments could continue after leaving care.



ADOPTION AND PERMANENCE

ADOPTION ORDERS

- **279** children looked after have been adopted over the last 3 years.
- The number of adoptions increased to **121** children looked after being adopted in 2014/15, much higher than in previous years.
- LINX would like to know the ages of those adopted as theorised that it's more difficult to place a child after they are 2 years old, and much more difficult to place a teenager. 93 (77%) of the children adopted in the last year were matched to a family before the age of 3. The eldest child that was adopted in 2014/15 was matched to a family at the age of 8.



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:

- **120** looked after children were given a permanent home under special guardianship order during 2014/15.
- **16** looked after children were given a permanent home under residence order during 2014/15, 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; **257** in 2014/15 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.
- ❖ Performance as at the end of Q2 in September 2014 was 64.3%
- ❖ Young people feel that the target should be 100% as everyone is entitled to be safe and secure. Young people wish to know where the others are residing to not meet this definition.
- ❖ Young people feel that when a young person leaves care, placement options should be available for the young person to consider, review and be approved before the change. Moreover, more support needs to be given around budgeting, as this could lead to problems paying for rent. Young people think that all children looked after should be involved in this process.

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 19th 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 **86** out of 100 young people aged 16-24 are in education, training or employment (Sep 2014)
- Year-end info is still provisional and will be available in the next report.

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.
- ❖ Performance as at the end of September 2014 shows **32** out of 100 care leavers were in education, training or employment on their 19th birthday which was a further drop from end of June figure of **41** out of 100.
- ❖ Young people feel that this isn't good enough and more young people should be in education or training

- ❖ Young people feel that individuals, due to potentially poor school grades, need more apprenticeships and volunteering schemes to be accessible. Funding could be used as an early intervention to help young people with grades in the form of extra tuition.
- ❖ Young people feel more help could be given to help young people to find courses and employment. Assistance with writing CVs or developing ICT and/or skills were highlighted as key. Furthermore, available funds in the form of college bursaries should be more accessible as not everyone is aware of what they are entitled to financially.

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.
- Of these 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.
- In 2013/14 there were 36 care leavers studying at university including 13 first year students.
- In 2014/15 there are 40 care leavers studying at university, including 10 first year students.
- 3 care leavers are re-taking a year in 2014/15.



COMMENTS:

- ❖ There is a good level of Care Leavers at University in each of the last three 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 show good progress, but there should be many more care leavers going to university.
- ❖ Young people feel that out of term accommodation needs to be more readily available as has been cited as a contributing factor in a young person's decision not to attend higher education.
- ❖ Young people believe other CLA are not aware of the support and funding available to them. The extra provisions that are available could support more young people through university. Support awareness has been spreading, but more could be done at a younger age to give young people the required information to inform their decision to attend higher education at an earlier stage.
- ❖ Currently, the staying put policy applies to Lancashire "in-house" foster carers but discussions are encouraged to occur surrounding those looked after children placed with independent fostering agencies regarding the possibility of staying put.
- ❖ Young people also suggested that leaving care and starting university occurs at the same time and this can be a stressful time for the young people involved. Individuals may also be put off the idea of attending university as they may be worried about not having anywhere to live during the holidays.

- ❖ Information for those attending university in 2014/15 is provisional and is subject to change.