

Lancashire County Council

Corporate Parenting Board

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 16th June, 2016 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 Ian Brown	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Julie Gibson	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Sue Prynn (Chair)	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Miss Kim Snape	- Lancashire County Council
Jane Simpson	- representing Foster Carers
Lynsey Evans	- Fostering Forum
Tony Morrissey	- Deputy Director, Children's Services
Kristal	- LINX Representative
Sam R	- LINX Representative
Gavin	- LINX Representative
Bradley	- LINX Representative
Sam W	- LINX Representative
Kris	- LINX Representative
Paige	- LINX Representative

Co-opted members

Debbie Ross	- Designated Nurse for CLA, representing CCG
Diane Booth	- Children's Social Care
Mia Leyland	- Barnardos
Susan Towers	- Agency Residential
Amanda Mansfield	- Independent Reviewing Officers
Annette McNeil	- Policy, Information and Commissioning Service
Rebecca Wilkinson	- Barnardos

Other Attendees

Sam Gorton (Clerk)	- Democratic Services, LCC
Mark Burrows	- Children's Rights Society
Shagufta Khan	- Children's Rights Society
Barbara Bath	- Fostering, Adoption, Residential and YOT

1. Appointment of Chair

The Board noted that County Councillor Susan Prynn was the Chair of the Board for the municipal year 2016/2017.

2. Introductions and Apologies

All were welcomed to the meeting and apologies were received and noted from County Councillor Brindle, Dr Nicky Bamford, Catherine, Kate Baggaley, Joanna Hunt, Audrey Swann, Angela Epps, Debbie Duffell and Kirsty Clarke.

3. Membership and Terms of Reference

The Board agreed the current membership and Terms of Reference and noted that membership had been increased to include private providers from fostering and residential settings that are commissioned by Lancashire County Council (LCC).

4. Notes of the Meeting and Matters Arising from 28 April 2016

The notes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

5. What our Elected Members have been doing

CC Brindle

CC Prynn reported on behalf of CC Brindle that she had followed up with the Head of Housing Department at Burnley Borough Council with regards care leavers and housing benefit and she is still awaiting a response. CC Brindle stated that she would follow this up.

CC Prynn

CC Prynn reported that following the last CPB meeting she had set up three Task and Finish Groups and the following elected members had been assigned to the following specific groups:

Mental Health – CC Brown and CC Prynn

Housing – CC Kim Snape and CC Prynn

Care Leavers Policy/Core Offer – CC Beavers and CC Prynn

The groups will carry out individual pieces of work to assure the quality of provision and practice in these areas. This will help inform the Care Leavers Policy and Core Offer. A combined Task Group report will then be completed and shared with CC Tomlinson, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools.

The Children's Services Scrutiny Board has a Youth Offending Team (YOT) subgroup of which CC Prynn is a member. This subgroup is looking at a set of recommendations for children in care when they enter the criminal justice system. CC Prynn tabled the "In Care, Out of Trouble" report as attached, which is an independent review chaired by Lord Laming.

The key element to this report is Appendix One on page 21. The Board and LINX were asked to look at Appendix One and send any comments on this to CC Prynn and Tony Morrissey, who will then look at taking it forward on behalf of the Board. CC Prynn will look at working with criminal justice agencies and how the Board can help prevent care leavers entering into the criminal justice system.

Action: Board members and LINX to send comments on Appendix One to CC Prynn and Tony Morrissey.

CC Beavers

CC Beavers attends the Fostering Panels that are held at County Hall and commented on how the panel has welcomed the questions provided by LINX (Lancashire's Children in Care Council) for them to ask potential foster carers and to share with carers what a young person would be looking for when they are looked after by them. It was felt this had enhanced the process and it was good to include young people's views/questions in the assessment.

CC Gibson

CC Gibson reported back on the Hate Crime Strategy that was mentioned at the last meeting. Feedback has been received and CC Gibson is now working with officers on this. A meeting with the Police has also taken place too.

CC Gibson is a member of Children's Services Scrutiny Board which is currently looking at SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) and putting together a set of recommendations.

With regards Regulation 22, CC Gibson stated that she is hoping to carry two out in the next few months.

CC Prynn congratulated LINX Young Inspectors who had recently been awarded the Diana Award 2016 in the Champion Volunteer category. Mia Leyland had nominated them, explaining about the number of hours they had volunteered to carry out inspections on behalf of Lancashire's children in care. Also a young person from a home where an inspection had been carried out, was a beneficiary and wrote about how the young inspectors had improved the services that they received. There are 14 young inspectors in total and they will visit Althorp in June/July and receive a certificate.

The Board congratulated the LINX Young Inspectors on their success.

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

What Have LINX Been Doing?

LINX began their session by informing the Board on what they had been up to since the last CPB. A copy of the PowerPoint detailing this is attached.

Lynsey Evans, Foster Carer had attended the session at Woodlands on fostering teenagers, and she reported that feedback from this event had changed some carers perspectives on teenagers, who are now looking into taking teenagers into their care.

Young Inspectors

The attached PowerPoint showed the Board what they had been doing.

It was requested that a breakdown of the reports that have been carried out be brought to the next meeting.

Action: Young Inspectors to provide a further breakdown on the reports.

Care Leaver's Pledge from the Children's Society

A short film was shown from the recent Care Leavers event that took place. A link can be found [here](#).

Mark Burrows, from the Children's Society, updated the Board on the Care Leavers Festival that took place in Manchester and spoke about the Pledge that Care Leavers had created. The festival was designed by young people across the North West to bring them together along with professionals and to share issues.

The Pledge can be found [here](#) and individuals, groups, teams, County Councillors and Authorities were urged to sign up to it to show that they are committed to changing how they think and work with care leavers in achieving what they want.

Action: All members were asked to share the link and encourage people to sign up.

Mark reported that at a Corporate Level across the North West, talks are being held around Council Tax Exemption and debt, financial management and education of care leavers. Different authorities are at different stages, however the discussions are being had even at parliamentary level – Edward Timpson is looking at the proposal for Council Tax exemption for care leavers.

With regards the council tax exemption, LINX were asked to write a letter to all the Councillors with Housing responsibilities in the District Councils and the CPB

would endorse the proposal within the letter. LINX were asked to also include discretionary payments in the letter.

Action: LINX to write a letter for the next CPB meeting, so the Board can endorse the proposal and distribute.

Care Leavers Activity

The Board were asked to look at the attached and decide which of the list were the top two priorities for care leavers in Lancashire.

Following discussions it was noted that adults felt that care leavers would have the following as the most important:

How much money will I have?

How will I sort out debts and manage my money?

However as can be seen from the attached, care leavers felt that the following were the top two most important pieces of information that they required:

What does a tenancy agreement mean?

What happens if I have a broken pipe/boiler?

CPB Performance Report

The Board noted the attached which was presented by LINX.

Fostering Teenagers

LINX have recently been involved in an event at Woodlands, where they spoke to foster carers around fostering teenagers and what it was that they felt they needed from them as carers. Please see attached PowerPoint.

Also the Board took part in an activity (as attached), which shows how a young person thinks and how their brain works. Answers are attached separately.

The final activity was for the Board to look at the positives of fostering teenagers. Attached are the results from the flipcharts.

Once again the Board thanked LINX for their fantastic contribution.

7. Housing

Diane Booth updated the Board on progress that was being made with housing and homelessness.

Attached is a copy of the letter on the Children and Social Work Bill that was sent to Edward Timpson.

The Local Authority has a Board called SALO which stands for "Supported Accommodation Learning Offer" which Bob Stott chairs. There are lots of Task and Finish Groups coming out of it which are continuing the engagement of CYP and challenging suitability around accommodation. The Board are looking at five different areas as outlined on the Positive Pathways Model document attached to these minutes.

A Housing Strategy is also being developed and at a recent conference in Lancashire, all Chief Executives and Leads for Housing from the District Councils turned up, which is a very positive message. It will also include 18/19 year olds who have never been in care, however, may be vulnerable, out of work and homeless.

Annette McNeil has been doing a piece of work around accommodation that care leavers have been in over the last 12 months.

However, there are barriers, as the housing benefits are due to change soon, which will have implications and will not be able to meet the needs of an 18 year old living alone, which is very challenging for the young person.

Action: Diane Booth to forward the legislation to CC Prynne that this has come from and when it is due to come in.

The challenge to the Authority is to support care leavers up to 25, however more information is required before the offer can be given. Hopefully further information will be available at the September CPB meeting. Children's Social Care (CSC) Senior Managers met with Care Leavers on 15 June 2016 to discuss further and Diane will be meeting with LINX again in two weeks' time. The districts are driving this and Housing Needs Officers are really keen and knowledgeable around benefits and what can and cannot be reasonably met.

Diane updated on joint training will be provided to care leavers and homeless young people by their Personal Advisors up to the age of 21 years of age. Care leavers will receive a £2000 leaving care grant to help them set up their accommodation. Six independence training sessions are also planned and if successful we will roll this out across the Districts. Wraparound support is crucial.

It was raised that later on within the private rented sector, it needs to be part of the framework agreement to give the young person a second chance.

Diane outlined that The Staying Put Policy also needs to be reviewed and this can be done as part of the Care Leavers Group.

Action: Care Leavers Task Group to review The Staying Put Policy.

A young person asked what the plans were for Out of Hours Support outside of 9am-5pm? Talks are taking place with Service 6, where this service is working really well and look at expanding it and making it more permanent. The young

person suggested looking at an advice line with a rota of professionals who work with Care Leavers – work in conjunction with the Emergency Duty Team.

Action: Barbara Bath to look at ways of providing Out of Hours support to Care Leavers.

8. Fostering Update

Barbara Bath, Head of Fostering, Adoption, Residential and Youth Offending Team Services, spoke to the presentation attached which is from an Inspection perspective.

Barbara reported that it was really useful that the young people were working with foster carers on supporting teenagers and this had also been highlighted as a requirement from the Ofsted Inspection.

Moving forward it is hoped that young people will become part of the assessment process and training of new foster carers and supporting workshops and forums too. This is a positive move going forward, so there will be lots of ways that young people will be influencing carers and adopters of the future.

The Recruitment Strategy for fostering and adoption has been re-written.

The Lifestory backlog has been cleared and there is now a process in place to ensure this does not happen again.

It was requested that data on successful adoptions in Lancashire be circulated to the Board.

Action: Barbara to send the adoption data to Sam Gorton to circulate to the Board.

9. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

10. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday, 4 August 2016 at 1.30pm in the Duke of Lancaster Room (formerly Cabinet Room 'C'), County Hall, Preston, PR1 8RJ.

11. PROUD Evaluation

This item was not discussed at the meeting as it was for information only.

Any issues arising from it, please forward to Sam Gorton, Clerk to the CPB who will forward to the relevant Elected Members/officers.



In Care, Out of Trouble

How the life chances of children in care can be transformed by protecting them from unnecessary involvement in the criminal justice system

An independent review chaired by Lord Laming

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Foreword

Since July 2013 I have been to 16 schools and I have been in 15 different placements all around the country ... All of my offending has been whilst in care.

Young review panel member, aged 15 years, 25 June 2015¹

These children are in our care; we, the state, are their parents – and what are we setting them up for...the dole, the streets, an early grave? I tell you: this shames our country and we will put it right.

The Rt. Hon. David Cameron MP, Prime Minister, October 2015²

This review was established to examine the reasons for, and how best to tackle, the over representation of children in care, or with experience of care, in the criminal justice system in England and Wales.

Aiming to reduce the disproportionate number of young people who are, or have been, in public care progressing into custody is laudable. The over representation of looked after children in the youth justice system has to be challenged and changed. But it soon becomes distressingly clear that starting at the point of evidence of criminal behaviour is for many young people simply too late in the day. Remedial work and rehabilitation are essential but prevention is so much more rewarding and fruitful for the young person and wider society. It is against that background that it would be good to pause and reflect again on the importance of childhood in the social and emotional development of every young person.

Good parenting entails a lifetime commitment. It creates the solid foundation on which is built the evolving unique personality that, hopefully, will in due course become the fulfilled adult. The essential ingredients are security, stability, unselfish love and an unyielding commitment to give the child the best start and hope for the future. It is in this context that young children develop self confidence, trust, personal and social values and optimism. Loss, neglect or trauma at this early stage in life often result in profound and enduring consequences.

Great emphasis should be placed on early life experiences. Guidance and support through pregnancy and during the early months of parenthood should be available to all who need it. There are clear long term benefits in identifying problems at an early stage rather than delaying until a crisis. It is in all of our interests that as many children as possible are enabled to grow up to become successful, law abiding and fulfilled citizens well able to be good role models for the next generation. We all have a part to play in this, but especially the wider family. At times of difficulty steps should be taken to involve other family members and encourage their different contributions and support. Handled in the right way a crisis might be short-lived and stability restored. After all, this is a well trodden path in many families without the assistance of the state. This can be hugely satisfying work for frontline staff. Working in this way in some local authorities has already resulted in fewer children coming into care.

Investing in childhood is more than a nice thing to do. It has a real value that goes beyond the child as it facilitates the future wellbeing of society. Failure to help the child and, where possible, to support the family at this stage is both costly to the child and very expensive to the state. In every way the price is high for everyone involved. In financial terms it costs over £200,000 each year to keep a young person in a secure children's home and the yearly cost of a place in a young offender institution is about £60,000.

Meeting many young people in custodial institutions demonstrates all too clearly the gaps in their social development and in their basic education. It is impossible not to be moved by their experiences and the serious constraints on their life chances. For some, their anger, frustrations, inability to express themselves except through challenging behaviour and possibly violence all point to failure, for whatever reason, in their earlier years. Yet with the right help at the right time, the capacity of many children to change and their resilience in difficult circumstances is admirable.

The staff in these establishments need to be equipped to demonstrate a mixture of sound professional skills and impressive personal qualities. They deserve good training, proper supervision and support. We should honour what they do on behalf of us all not least because few of us, including me, would choose to take on such challenging and at times distressing work. Remedial work can be tough, demanding and at times dispiriting. But this review has heard how good practice can achieve inspiring results.

What is abundantly clear is that no one service operating alone can hope to meet the needs of these young people or their families. Each one of the key public services has a distinct and clear responsibility in law to fulfil the duties placed upon them by the United Kingdom Parliament and the Welsh Assembly. One of those duties is to work in partnership with each of the other services. Over the years there have been far too many well publicised examples of services failing to work across organisational boundaries both in the exchange of information and in day by day practice in the protection and support of vulnerable children. We have seen and heard of excellent joint working and co-located teams in places such as Leeds and Surrey to divert looked after children from unnecessary criminalisation. Good practice is achieving splendid results in other areas too. Now is the time to make it standard practice everywhere.

Surely the time has come when it should be made clear that the performance of the most senior officers, and their tenure, should be judged against the quality and effectiveness of the work for children, not least in the success of the good collaboration between different services. This is not to imply that senior managers can know each child in public care. But they must be expected to have put in place robust and effective quality standards and fail-safe mechanisms so that a possible service failure and drift are identified and corrected speedily. For example in Leeds, senior staff in each of the key services get a weekly report on data such as the numbers of children not in school, admitted to care, or in custodial settings. Ofsted has recently assessed three London boroughs as outstanding.

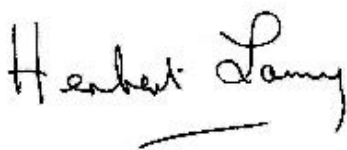
I am indebted to my expert panel for their work in shaping and contributing to this review. In particular I should like to commend the work of young members of the panel whose insights and preparedness to draw on their own experiences of being in care and their involvement with the criminal justice system have informed the review from the start. It is against that background that we make the recommendations for change which are set out in this report.

These are the outcomes we wish to see:

- The work must be driven by strong and determined leadership at national and local levels, taking a strategic multi-agency approach to protecting children in care against criminalisation. This needs to be underpinned by better data collection so as to improve services for children and families, especially those at risk.
- We want to see consistent, early support for children and families and, where necessary, good parenting by the state.
- It is important to investigate and address the needs of minority groups of looked after children who are at risk of involvement in the criminal justice system.
- There must be more effective joint working between families, local authorities, youth offending services, child and adolescent mental health services, the police and other criminal justice agencies leading to substantially improved opportunities for preventing the criminalisation of looked after children and diverting them from the criminal justice system wherever possible. Where this cannot be done, looked after children deserve proper support and fair treatment throughout the criminal justice process.
- Lastly, young people leaving care are vulnerable and must have more consistent support.

The aims of this report will command widespread support. We have outlined the steps to be taken, and by whom, to effect the necessary improvements.

We should be impatient of poor practice that puts at risk the safety of children and undermines their life chances. The organisational model is secondary to the achieved results. Good results are being demonstrated in authorities that have a shared vision, clear ambitions and a rigorous commitment to enabling vulnerable children to achieve much. There is no reason why proven good practice cannot now be standard practice everywhere.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Herbert Laming'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Laming CBE DL

Summary of findings and recommendations

Introduction

When the state takes over the parenting of someone else's child, it has both a legal and moral responsibility to be a good parent. Quite often this will require determined effort to remedy the inadequacies or serious failure of the earlier parenting experienced by the young person. These failures, for whatever reason they arise, can result in profound deficiencies, be they in education, social skills or personal development. Remedial work depends not only on the skills but also the commitment, ambition and determination of the staff, the carers and possibly the members of the wider family.

This report is aimed at encouraging good practice and ensuring that sound quality standards become the everyday experience for each and every child who has to depend upon the state for their safety, their proper development and their confidence in their future. Although the task demands much of everyone involved with each young person it is, nevertheless, both essential and potentially most rewarding for both the young person and the state. Drift is the enemy of the good in the life of a young person. Failure is costly both in personal terms and for the state.

This report demonstrates just what can be achieved, given a clear vision, a commitment to timely joint working across the key agencies and a belief in the unique value of each child.

The good news is that it is being done in some areas. The least we can do is have this ambition for each child in our care.

Tackling the over-representation of looked after children in the criminal justice system

Around half of the children currently in custody in England and Wales have been in care at some point. At the very least, that tells us that we are missing opportunities to turn young lives around, and prevent future crime.

This report describes practical steps to take those opportunities. It is based on what we have been told by young people who know the system from the inside, the experience of professionals in many agencies who care for them, a unique survey of local authorities and fresh analysis of relevant statistical and research evidence.³

What we have found:

- 94% of looked after children in England and Wales do not get into trouble with the law
- Nonetheless, children in care are significantly over represented in the criminal justice system and in custody, where many have a particularly poor experience
- Children in care who are at risk of offending need consistent emotional and practical support from their carers and other professionals and are likely to be especially vulnerable when they leave care.

Young people with experience of care and the criminal justice system have told us that:

- Separation from their birth family understandably hurts and the care system must do more to help them come to terms with this

- Frequent changes in who looks after them, where they live, where they go to school and who offers emotional and practical support damage their prospects
- Support from peer mentors would help
- Clarity about what they can expect from the care system is crucial, as is involvement in decisions that affect their lives
- They often feel isolated and unsupported at critical moments, not least if they have to appear in court or spend time in custody
- Some young people from minority ethnic backgrounds feel they are subject to negative stereotyping on the grounds of their race, particularly by the police, and that their cultural needs are not consistently met by children's social care services.

But we have also found that:

- The rate at which a minority of children move from care into the criminal justice system is not inevitable. It can be reduced - for example by as much as 45% over four years in Surrey, as a result of effective local practice;
- Good practice can dramatically reduce the long term costs that arise when young people get sucked into the criminal justice system unnecessarily - one study calculated a return of £3.41 for every £1 invested.⁴

What we recommend

The review's findings and recommendations are the product of a year's intensive inquiry and are intended for practitioners as well as policy makers. The review had the benefit of a broad advisory panel including leading experts in the field, experienced practitioners and, above all, children and young people with first-hand experience of care and the criminal justice system.

Over 220 written submissions, a number of oral evidence sessions, meetings and visits provided an extraordinary wealth of experience and opinion on which to draw. These are referred to in detail in the full review report and, where permission is given, will be published on the Prison Reform Trust website following the report launch. We also commissioned a literature review by Dr Jo Staines of the Hadley Centre for Adoption and Foster Care Studies which summarises current domestic and international research about the criminalisation of looked after children and young people.

The full review report and the literature review can be downloaded from the Prison Reform Trust website: www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/carereview

The Prime Minister's personal commitment to transform the life chances of children in care, and the concurrent reviews commissioned by the UK government into residential care and the treatment of young people in custody make this a critical time to listen to the voices within this report. A coherent programme of reform, led from the very top, has the opportunity to turn both the Prime Minister's and the Welsh Government's vision into reality.

This executive summary sets out the practical action that we believe is required to give children in care the protection they need and deserve from being needlessly drawn into the criminal justice system. Our findings and recommendations, grouped under six outcomes we would like to see, are as follows:

Outcome One: Strong and determined leadership at national and local level drives a strategic, multi-agency approach to protecting children in care from criminalisation

We need to make every effort to avoid the unnecessary criminalisation of children in care, making sure that the criminal justice system is not used for resolving issues that would ordinarily fit under the umbrella of parenting. We need to work with our partners to improve our understanding of the child in care to improve outcomes for them.

National Police Chiefs' Council, 2015⁵

It is essential that all councillors understand and contribute to the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare and education of children and young people looked after and to promote their achievements and raise their aspirations.

Former head teacher⁶

Looked after children are significantly over-represented in the criminal justice system. This is a national problem which central and local government, and local criminal justice agencies, can and must do more to address. Reductions in the rate at which children in care are criminalised will not happen by accident. It takes leadership nationally and locally, a commitment to good practice, effective joint working and operations and performance measurement founded on reliable data.

There is considerable existing provision in statutory guidance for local authorities which should protect looked after children from criminalisation, but compliance is not consistent and there are areas in which the guidance must be strengthened. Crown Prosecution Service guidance on the treatment of looked after children is helpful but is again inconsistently applied, and should be extended. There is limited guidance for the police although the National Police Chiefs Council is providing leadership. Where joint working protocols exist between local agencies, they are not always followed.

We therefore make the following recommendations.

Recommendation 1 – Provide national leadership

We recommend the formation of a cabinet sub-committee (England), or equivalent body (Wales), to provide national leadership in protecting looked after children and young people from unnecessary criminalisation by ensuring there is good joint working, proper regulation and policy development across UK government departments, and across the Welsh Government, to act as an example to local government services, and by:⁷

1.1 Commissioning and disseminating a cross-departmental concordat on protecting looked after children from criminalisation, to reinforce the statutory obligations of all relevant agencies and highlight the need for joint action:⁸

(a) Each concordat should require local authorities, police and other relevant agencies to set and deliver locally agreed outcomes to reduce the criminalisation of, and offending by, children and young people in care;

(b) Both concordats should be developed within one year. Within the same period, any corresponding amendments required to statutory guidance should be identified and put in place. There should be a further two year period for implementation followed by regular review. Each concordat should be guided by the principles set out in Appendix One (p21).

1.2 Ensuring that common standards are set for the collection, analysis and publication of data about children and young people in the criminal justice system who are or have been in care so that we can all be better informed about their needs;

1.3 Ensuring inspection measures and assessments of performance are set that address criminalisation, in particular:

(a) Inspections of local authorities, children's homes and schools by the relevant inspectorates should specifically measure performance based on the level of involvement of their looked after children with the criminal justice system and the consistency of local authority support for looked after children who become involved with the criminal justice system, and should routinely report on this.⁹ In the case of local authorities this should include, for example, asking in advance of inspections how many times the police have been called out in the previous 12 months in relation to the behaviour in a care home of any child looked after by that local authority. In the case of inspections of individual care homes, advance information should be requested concerning the number of police call outs in the previous 12 months in relation to the behaviour of any child in that care home.

(b) Inspections of youth justice services by the relevant inspectorates covering health, children's social care, education and training should also specifically measure performance based on outcomes for looked after children.

1.4 Ensuring the convergence of information systems running between children's social care and youth justice services both in England and Wales.

1.5 Ensuring that the newly proposed authoritative body for children's social care in England, based on the 'What works' model¹⁰, works alongside the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales to disseminate information about leading practice in protecting children in care, and those on the edge of care, against criminalisation; and that in Wales consideration is given to the development of similar arrangements.

Recommendation 2 – Achieve consistent police practice

We recommend that the Home Office should:

2.1 Advocate the adoption and implementation of regional police protocols throughout England and Wales to reduce the prosecution of children and young people in care, modelled on the South East England and Gwent protocols;

2.2 As proposed by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Children¹¹, review the Home Office Counting Rules and develop a new outcome, allowing police forces to record low-level, crime-related behaviour by children and young people in a way that ensures referral to a welfare agency to address the behaviour, does not create a criminal record and cannot be disclosed by an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check;

- 2.3 In consultation with the Department for Education and the Welsh Government, commission and publish a crime recording protocol for incidents in children's care homes, similar to the protocol in operation for schools; and
- 2.4 Require police and crime commissioners to set clear expectations for police forces to work in collaboration with local authorities and other agencies to protect children in care from unnecessary criminalisation. Police and crime commissioners should take account of the needs and circumstances of looked after children when commissioning services to reduce crime in their local area.

Outcome Two: The important role of early support for children and families at risk is recognised

When I was two years old my Dad left and it messed my Mum's head up. I've been in care since I was nine or ten. I first went into care when my Mum hospitalised my little sister, due to mental health.

Young person aged 15 years

...natural parenting needs to be much more highly valued than it often is, with the recognition that this is a demanding vocation.

Former social worker¹²

...please look more at what happens to cause children to be brought into care in the first place. For example, at the research into Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder and Attachment Disorder, brain-based development and the lasting psychological effects of neglect and abuse and rape.

Registered social worker¹³

For nearly two-thirds of children in care, the main reason they are looked after is that they have suffered abuse or neglect. Early support for children and families plays an important part in protecting children and young people in care, and those on the edge of care, against criminalisation. The economic benefits of effective early support services have been established by the Early Intervention Foundation. Support for adoptive parents is also critical. Central and local government must work together to ensure that this essential work is sustained and developed.

Recommendation 3 – Provide early support for children and families at risk

We recommend that each concordat on protecting looked after children from criminalisation (see recommendation 1) should explicitly recognise the important role that early support for children and families plays in protecting children and young people in care, and those on the edge of care, against criminalisation. This should include commitments by central and local government to work together to ensure that early support services aimed at protecting children and young people from maltreatment, neglect and inadequate parenting are sustained and developed.

Outcome Three: Good parenting by the state gives children in care the chance to thrive and protects them from criminalisation

...the care system...truly saved my life.

Young woman with experience of care and the criminal justice system¹⁴

Care needs to mean care. A child in the care of the state should be given the best possible home environment... I am sure there are individual examples of excellent care ... but overall the state is failing children who have already been failed by their families. We fail to give them good quality family care and we punish them when they misbehave... Send them out of the care system with a criminal record and their future burden on society is assured.

Retired magistrate and school governor¹⁵

As professionals, we have to make damn sure that we replace or rebuild the family relationships that we are disrupting.

Isabelle Trowler, Chief Social Worker for Children & Families in England, oral evidence, 10/09/15

In this review we examined the role that good parenting by the state (described in the Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations as ‘corporate parenting’) has to play in protecting children and young people in care from criminalisation. Many of the priority areas we identify are covered by the Children Act 1989¹⁶ guidance and regulations and by the regulations and codes of practice issued under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. However, evidence received by the review has highlighted that compliance is not consistent. The guidance is generally sound, although there are areas in which it should be strengthened. However the guidance is not an end in itself and will only have the required impact when it is put into practice everywhere at local level. In this section we propose amendments to the guidance and recommend that key provisions should be reinforced by inclusion within the concordat on protecting looked after children from criminalisation (see recommendation 1).

Recommendation 4 – Strengthen local authority leadership

We recommend that the following measures be introduced to strengthen local authority leadership to protect looked after children from unnecessary criminalisation. All these measures could be implemented, in England, by amendments to the Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations (that are next to be reviewed in April 2017), and in Wales by amendments to the codes of practice issued on the exercise of social services functions and partnership arrangements in relation to the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014:

- 4.1 Statutory guidance must assert the important role of the local authority in tackling the stigma which children in care can encounter, as identified by research and in this review.¹⁷ The guidance must make clear that local authorities should raise awareness amongst local partner agencies and others about the needs, circumstances and characteristics of looked after children and challenge negative stereotypes. This is critical to enabling children to achieve the ‘wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and skills in order to have an enjoyable childhood and successful adult life’ for example, as referred to in the Children Act guidance and regulations, and protecting them from needless involvement in the criminal justice system.

4.2 Statutory guidance must -

(a) Require local authorities to hold regular senior-level, strategic meetings with their multi-agency partners with the common aim of improving outcomes for looked after children, including protecting them from criminalisation. This must provide a commitment to share information, promote good practice and make joint decisions about matters affecting looked after children locally.

(b) Describe a range of activities that local authorities and their partners must routinely carry out in fulfilment of their responsibilities for parenting, including a requirement that:

(i) Directors of children's or social services must receive regular, accurate information about the progress of all children from entry into care and specifically the involvement in the criminal justice system of looked after children for whom they are responsible. Directors of children's or social services should summarise this information as part of their regular reporting to lead members for children's services.

(ii) Directors of children's or social services must ensure that their department has a close working relationship, including fast and effective channels of communication, with local criminal justice agencies (youth justice services, the police, the Crown Prosecution Service, the courts and secure establishments) with the common aim of ensuring that looked after children are protected from unnecessary criminalisation wherever possible and, where this is not possible, that they are well supported and fairly treated within the criminal justice system. This must include ensuring that their department informs local criminal justice agencies promptly when they are working with a looked after child, provides information about the child's circumstances and any vulnerabilities, and that the department provides the necessary support to that child to help achieve diversion from the criminal justice system where possible and, where this is not possible, to support the child throughout the criminal justice process.

4.3 Local authorities must be required to:

(a) Recruit, train and support young adults who have experience of the care system to act as peer mentors and positive role models to children and young people in care. This reflects a clear consensus among young people who told this review that this kind of support would have given them valuable emotional and practical support and helped them to make better choices.

(b) Carry out a rigorous review when any looked after child experiences three or more placement moves within 12 months and where any placement move arises following a police call-out in relation to that child's behaviour, in order to learn why this happened and how it can be avoided in future, and that the results of such reviews are regularly reported to the lead members for children's services.

4.4 All bodies in Wales whom we consulted expressed concern about the high number of out of authority placements there by English authorities. The evidence suggests that many of these placements lack effective planning and information sharing, and that these factors can contribute to the criminalisation of looked after children. We therefore recommend that English statutory guidance must be amended to incorporate the requirements specified in the Code of Practice (No. 6) issued in relation to the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

Recommendation 5 – Improve joint working between children’s social care and social services, and criminal justice agencies

We recommend that the following measures must be implemented in England to improve joint working for the protection of children in care from needless criminalisation. This can be done through amendments to Section 8 of Volume 2 of the Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations when it is next reviewed in April 2017:

- 5.1 Local authorities must hold a regular, formal panel meeting with the local police force and other partners to review the circumstances of each looked after child at the first indication that they may have begun to offend, so that early, purposeful diversion from the criminal justice system can be put in place. This should include appropriate sharing of information and joint decision making wherever possible.
- 5.2 Local authorities must put in place resources, including training and support through practitioner forums, to ensure that carers in all placements are able to support children’s social development and respond to challenging behaviour without involving the police formally. This has been done successfully in some areas through the use of restorative practice (see page 28).¹⁸
- 5.3 All children’s homes, whether independent or publicly run, must be required to develop and implement a protocol with their local police force, in consultation with children’s social care services, to minimise formal police involvement in managing children’s behaviour. The protocol’s operation must be monitored by the director of children’s services and the lead member for children’s services.
- 5.4 Local authorities must always notify criminal justice agencies promptly (youth justice services, the police, the Crown Prosecution Service, the courts, and custodial establishments) when a looked after child comes into contact with the criminal justice system.
- 5.5 Where a looked after child is arrested, the local authority must ensure within a reasonable time that the child has support at the police station from an appropriate adult who knows them, who understands their role and is able to carry it out, and who has no conflict of interest in relation to the proceedings against the child.
- 5.6 Where a looked after child appears in court, it should be a requirement for the child’s social worker to attend court with the child (rather than simply good practice, as currently stated at paragraph 8.41 of the guidance). Where the social worker does not know the child well, another adult must also attend who does know the child, such as a carer or family

member, provided that this is safe and in the child's best interests, and in accordance with the child's wishes and feelings.

- 5.7 There must be short time limits within which information about a looked after child must be communicated to other agencies at each stage of the criminal justice process, including when a looked after child is placed in a custodial setting.
- 5.8 Resettlement planning must be completed 21 days before a looked after child's release from custody (increasing the current time limit of 10 working days) when the period of time in custody allows this. The governing governor, director or head of the secure establishment must notify the director of children's services when resettlement planning has not been completed within this time period.
- 5.9 Every effort must be made by the local authority to facilitate family support for the child at all stages of the criminal justice process where this is safe and in the child's best interests, and in accordance with the child's wishes and feelings.

We recommend that similar measures be adopted in Wales to complement the existing codes of practice issued in respect of Parts 6, 9 and 11 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

Recommendation 6 – Recognise the important role of good parenting by the state

We recommend that each concordat on protecting looked after children from criminalisation (recommendation 1) should explicitly recognise the important role that good parenting by the state plays in protecting children and young people in care against criminalisation. This must include reinforcement of the need for local authorities to take the steps set out below:

- 6.1 Ensure that each child in care is treated with respect and understanding, is fully informed and engaged in matters that affect their lives, and receives consistent emotional and practical support from their primary carer and at least one other trusted adult. This may be a social worker, Independent Visitor or other professional or volunteer.
- 6.2 Ensure that each child in care is supported in developing and sustaining positive relationships with their family members where this is safe, in the child's best interests, and in accordance with the child's wishes and feelings.
- 6.3 Facilitate and support peer mentoring of children and young people in care by young adults who have experience of the care system and can act as positive role models.
- 6.4 Ensure that appropriate responses are made to challenging behaviour without unnecessarily involving the police. The police and youth justice services also have a role to play here.
- 6.5 Ensure that suitable care placements are available locally to meet local need and placement choices are made in consultation with children and young people.
- 6.6 Ensure that a rigorous review takes place where any child experiences three or more placement moves within 12 months, and where any placement move arises following a

police call out in relation to that child's behaviour in order to learn why this happened and how it can be avoided in future, and that the results of such reviews are regularly reported to the lead member for children's services.

- 6.7 Ensure that foster carers and residential care staff have sufficient training and support to promote children's social development, to respond to challenging behaviour without inappropriately involving the police, and to improve placement stability. This has been done successfully in some areas through restorative practice (see page 28).
- 6.8 Ensure that looked after children and young people are effectively supported to thrive in their education and other constructive activities. This must include training for all teachers about the additional needs that looked after children can have, as part of their core teacher training.
- 6.9 In relation to the mental health and emotional wellbeing of looked after children, we recommend that:
- (a) All children should be assessed by a mental health professional upon entering care;
 - (b) There should be a presumption that looked after children and young people are given first priority for mental health services until they have been fully assessed, after which point priority should be determined based on clinical need. This should be an essential element of all contracts through which child and adolescent mental health services are commissioned, and monitoring the numbers of referrals and time to first assessment should be part of the contract monitoring process.

Outcome Four: Needs and characteristics of looked after children in minority groups are taken into account in protecting them from criminalisation

Not enough is known about the relationship between the involvement of looked after children and young people in the criminal justice system and their ethnicity, faith, gender or disability. Action is needed by all relevant agencies in order to fulfil their obligations under equality law and give looked after children in minority groups the particular protection from criminalisation that they need and deserve.

Children from minority ethnic groups

Looked after children and young people who are black or from other minority ethnic backgrounds, and children and young people of Muslim faith, are over-represented in the criminal justice system and some minority ethnic young people feel discriminated against, particularly by the police:

You are just not given a chance on the outside as a young black man - you are always judged negatively.

Young person in custody with experience of care¹⁹

... Muslim young people suffer from negative stereotyping in society, the media, government policy and legislation... Those in care and the youth justice system are likely to be impacted by such stereotyping throughout their lives, before entering, during engagement in, and following exit from, care and/or the youth justice system.

Imkaan²⁰

Girls

There are concerns about the extent to which the needs of looked after girls are addressed in the criminal justice system because they represent a very small proportion of the whole. Negative stereotyping on the basis of care status and involvement in offending may be compounded as a result of their gender and girls have told us they feel they are not taken seriously as victims of crime:

I feel like we have a double standard, it's not just with the police or social services, with the whole public sector... Like the police, if I'm in trouble or whatever, they'll come there super quick, they bug me, they'll run me down, they'll call me names... Then, when I got robbed and called them, they were very willy-nilly...there was never an explanation of what actions exactly they were going to take.

Young woman with experience of care and the criminal justice system²¹

Children with disabilities, learning difficulties and speech, language and communication needs

Children and young people with developmental disabilities and disorders, learning disabilities, learning difficulties and speech, language and communication needs are known to be over-represented in care and the criminal justice system. Evidence to the review suggests that not enough is being done to identify such conditions and needs at an early stage and to ensure they are addressed in order to support children's development and protect them from criminalisation and the risk of unfair treatment within the criminal justice system:

The lack of understanding about how [ADHD, ASD and Learning Disability], in particular ADHD can contribute towards both children coming into care and into custody – is grossly overlooked....

Consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist²²

Foreign national children

Submissions to the review reveal that local services may struggle to meet the mental health needs of asylum seeking children who have experienced extreme trauma and violence. This is likely to be an increasing challenge for local authorities receiving unaccompanied children fleeing conflict in the Middle East. There appears to be a lack of support for looked after children in resolving problems with their immigration status. The review has also been told of unfairness in proceedings to deport foreign nationals due to criminality, where little or no account has been taken of the care background of the person subject to deportation:

Our view is not that the fact of [our client] being brought up in care should be determinative of the issue as to his deportation, but that having been brought up in care the Tribunal should have taken cognisance of that as a contributory factor to his criminality, and attached some weight to that fact.

Furthermore, he had already suffered a traumatic upbringing it seems even before he came to the UK, and that should have been recognised by social services, in order that his particular needs were appropriately addressed.

Solicitors' firm²³

Child victims of trafficking

We have received reports that looked after children who are victims of trafficking continue to be prosecuted in this country despite legal protections and, as acknowledged by the National Police Chiefs' Council and Home Office, regularly go missing from local authority care and are trafficked again. ECPAT UK reports that professionals across the criminal justice system are unaware of the problem, have a poor understanding of trafficking and little knowledge of how to engage with this group. Their concerns are echoed by a solicitor specialising in representing child trafficking victims:

...In the UK we continue to criminalise exploited and trafficked minors, despite having legal protections ... I am currently being referred on average a case a week, the true scale of the problem is vast and victims of trafficking are being prosecuted daily throughout the UK..

Many of my clients who have been prosecuted go missing within a week of being released from custody, from their foster placements and local authority care. There are issues with safeguarding, protection plans and lack of training and awareness surrounding human trafficking and the complexities of debt bondage...

Solicitor²⁴

Recommendation 7 – Respond to the particular needs of looked after children and young people in minority groups

7.1 Data about looked after children's involvement in the criminal justice system should be regularly published and clearly disaggregated on the basis of ethnicity, faith, gender and disability and, where applicable, the type of custodial establishment in which children are held.

7.2 We welcome David Lammy MP's independent review of the treatment of, and outcomes for black, Asian and minority ethnic people in the criminal justice system, commissioned by the Prime Minister and due to report in Spring 2017.²⁵ With assistance from the Department for Education, the Welsh Government and the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, the Lammy review should:

(a) Specifically consider the experience of looked after children and young people who are black or from other minority ethnic backgrounds in the criminal justice system, including why they are over-represented in custody compared to other looked after children; and

(b) Analyse the available data, disaggregated by ethnicity and region, and make recommendations as to gaps that need to be filled in order to identify unequal outcomes and their underlying reasons, to achieve equal treatment for all children and young people, and to measure progress.

7.3 In establishing and monitoring locally agreed outcomes to protect children and young people in care from criminalisation (see recommendation 1), lead local authority members

for children's and social services, corporate parenting boards and Chief Constables should include a specific focus on:

- (a) Meeting the needs of children and young people in care who are black or from another minority ethnic group
- (b) Meeting any faith-related needs of children and young people in care
- (c) Ensuring that the treatment of children and young people in care is gender-sensitive.²⁶ This must include, at a minimum, ensuring that girls have access to support and supervision by female officers and staff
- (d) Meeting any additional needs of children and young people in care due to developmental disabilities and disorders, learning disabilities, learning difficulties and speech, language and communication needs. This should include training to ensure that frontline staff and police officers in all agencies are able to identify and respond to any possible needs, ensuring prompt and appropriate information sharing about known needs and ensuring children and young people have access to support and any specialist services required to support their social development, education and emotional wellbeing and protect them from criminalisation
- (e) Meeting the needs of looked after children who are subject to immigration control. This should include, at a minimum:
 - (i) Ensuring that the mental health needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking children are met as a priority, recognising the circumstances of their coming to the United Kingdom
 - (ii) Supporting foreign national children in care to resolve any outstanding matters concerning their immigration status
 - (iii) Ensuring that young people with experience of care who are subject to deportation proceedings due to criminality are legally represented in those proceedings and that full information is provided to the tribunal to ensure that the circumstances of their coming to the UK and their experiences in the care system are taken into account
- (f) Meeting the needs of looked after children who are potential victims of trafficking. This should include ensuring that they are identified as victims at the earliest possible stage and protected in line with legislation and policy. This must ensure at a minimum that:
 - (i) The police:
 - (a) Cover trafficking in the custody record/booking in process
 - (b) Cover trafficking in crime reports
 - (c) Share information with other forces to avoid new prosecutions of children who are trafficked again

- ii) Children's social care and social services, youth justice services, the police, Crown Prosecution Service, lawyers, magistrates, judges and staff in the secure estate receive training on how to identify potential child victims of trafficking and how to safeguard those children
- iii) The Home Office, Ministry of Justice and Youth Justice Board for England and Wales work together to produce guidance on how to identify victims of trafficking and how to safeguard possible victims in the secure estate.

Outcome Five: Effective prevention, diversion and rehabilitation - close joint work is pivotal between children's social care, youth justice services, child and adolescent mental health services, the police, the Crown Prosecution Service, the courts and the secure estate

From my experiences it felt that I was in care so it was expected I got into trouble with the police, as I was bad news. I felt that children in care were treated differently in the youth justice system to someone who may live at home with their parents.

Adult who grew up in care²⁷

Our Youth Panel took up this issue with the Crown Prosecution Service and the Local Authority, and we kept being given the reassurance that every case involving a looked-after child was reviewed according to a special protocol to weed out minor misdemeanours and only prosecute those cases which passed a 'public interest' test. And yet the young people continued to appear in court for throwing ice creams, kicking doors, squirting shower gel on carpets, using abusive language to staff.

Magistrate, recently retired²⁸

Close joint work between children's social care and social services, youth offending services, the police and other criminal justice agencies must become standard practice across England and Wales in order to protect looked after children from criminalisation. This work should be aimed at ensuring carers are able to support children to behave in a socially acceptable way and to deal with challenging behaviour without involving the police; that looked after children are diverted from the criminal justice system wherever possible; and that, where this is not possible, looked after children are well supported and fairly treated throughout the criminal justice process and prevent reoffending. This has been done successfully in some areas through the use of restorative practice (please see page 28).

Recommendation 8 - Fair treatment and proper support for looked after children from criminal justice agencies

8.1 All criminal justice agencies (youth justice services, the police, the Crown Prosecution Service, the courts and secure establishments), working closely with children's social care and social services, must ensure that they know when they are working with a child in care, understand their vulnerabilities and take a strategic and practical approach to ensuring that looked after children are fairly treated and well supported throughout the criminal justice process.

- 8.2 The police should not interview a child in custody, charge a child with an offence or administer an out of court disposal, without knowing whether that child is looked after and, where the child is looked after, without consulting their parent local authority. Where a looked after child is interviewed in custody, charged or receives an out of court disposal without these steps having been taken, the police should be required to explain the reasons to the court in any later proceedings.
- 8.3 The Crown Prosecution Service should review the operation of its guidance on the prosecution of looked after children in residential care in order to satisfy itself that both the letter and spirit of the guidance is being followed consistently and in all cases and, as part of this process, consider extending the guidance so that it covers all looked after children.
- 8.4 Where it appears that Crown Prosecution Service guidance for the treatment of looked after children has not been followed in bringing a prosecution, magistrates and judges should be able to stand a case down to allow the prosecution and defence to engage in a conference outside the courtroom, in an attempt to resolve the situation without resorting to formal court proceedings.
- 8.5 We take this opportunity to underline the basic principle that custody should only ever be used for children and young people where there is no alternative, whether or not they are looked after. Further:
- (a) Where there is no alternative to custody, looked after children, like other children, should be placed in small, local units which are designed to promote their psychological and emotional wellbeing. We welcome the indication from Charlie Taylor that his review of youth justice, commissioned by the Secretary State for Justice, will include a fundamental rethink of children's custody, including the closure of young offender institutions and the establishment of small units with a strong focus on emotional wellbeing and education.
 - (b) Submissions to this review and research by HM Inspectorate of Prisons, Inquest and others demonstrates that looked after children can be particularly vulnerable while in custody and often have a particularly poor experience. A thoroughgoing review of custodial provision is required to ensure that the needs of looked after children are fully addressed within custody, including safeguarding, rehabilitation and planning for resettlement.

Recommendation 9 – Strengthen support from children's social care, social services and youth justice services for looked after children in the criminal justice system

Each concordat on protecting looked after children from criminalisation (see recommendation 1) should reinforce the responsibility of children's social care services to work closely with youth justice services in order to:

- 9.1 Support looked after children to be diverted from the criminal justice system and custody wherever possible, including:
- (a) Ensuring the matter is dealt with without court proceedings unless there is no alternative
 - (b) Ensuring wherever possible that the child is eligible for bail and is able to comply with bail conditions

(c) Ensuring that where a child is convicted of an offence, the court is presented with robust community alternatives to custody, unless custody is the only possible outcome.

9.2 Ensure that where a child is remanded or sentenced to custody, the child is well supported during his or her time in custody and effective planning for the child's resettlement.

Outcome Six: Young people leaving care continue to benefit from good parenting and are protected from criminalisation

I feel like maybe if social services had not dumped me at the age of 16 and expect me to stand on my own two feet as a child, maybe I could of made different choices.

Young person responding to the review

.....It was less about 'me leaving care'....and more about 'care leaving me'

Young person cited in submission by Surrey County Council Youth Support Service and Surrey Police

Young people leaving care are too often expected to reach independence at a young age and with insufficient information and practical and emotional support, increasing their risk of criminalisation. Existing measures aimed at enabling children to stay in care until they are ready to become independent should be made available consistently across England and Wales, and support for those who are not engaged in education or training should be increased. Young people leaving care should receive clear information and adequate support (financial, practical, emotional) to enable them to thrive. We welcome the 'Staying Put' and 'When I am Ready' programmes which allows young people who are settled in foster care to stay with their foster carers up to the age of 21.

Recommendation 10 – Improve the rehabilitation of looked after children who have offended and support young people leaving care

- 10.1 Where any child is convicted of a minor offence, including a looked after child, consideration should be given to wiping the rehabilitation (or disclosure) period for that offence immediately. Where this is not possible, the rehabilitation period should be shortened and the offence should be expunged from the child's record at the age of 18.
- 10.2 Given the research evidence that leaving care early (at 16 or 17 years) is associated with poor outcomes, we recommend that the 'Staying Put' and 'When I am ready' arrangements currently provided to looked after children in foster care should be extended to looked after children leaving residential care and transitional accommodation placements.
- 10.3 We recommend that support for care leavers who are not in education or training should be extended from 21 to 25 years, matching the support received by care leavers in training or education.

Appendix One

Concordats on protecting looked after children from criminalisation: guiding principles

1. The cabinet sub-committee, and appropriate Welsh Government body should commission and disseminate a concordat on protecting looked after children from criminalisation to support local children's social care or social services and criminal justice agencies in protecting looked after children in England and Wales from unnecessary involvement in the criminal justice system. Each concordat will reinforce legislation and statutory guidance concerning children in care and care leavers.²⁹
2. Each concordat should be developed within one year. Within the same period, any corresponding amendments required to statutory guidance should be identified and put in place. There should be a further two year period for implementation followed by regular review.
3. Each concordat should set clear expectations for lead members, corporate parenting boards and chief constables to work together in partnership with other relevant agencies to establish common goals and implement joint working protocols to protect children in care against criminalisation. Relevant agencies include care providers, health commissioning bodies, health services, education services, the Crown Prosecution Service, courts and secure establishments. Joint working should include effective data sharing protocols and regular meeting forums.
4. Joint decision-making by local authorities and partner agencies should be facilitated through a decision making panel including senior-level representatives from the local authority, police, health and education services. This would be for all children but would be a good mechanism for ensuring that relevant factors for looked after children are properly considered.
5. Each concordat should recognise the important roles of early support for children and families at risk and good parenting by the state in protecting looked after children from criminalisation, and should set out the expectations on local authorities as described at recommendations 3 and 6.
6. Each concordat should be developed and implemented in consultation with children and young people with experience of care and the criminal justice system, parents and carers, local authority leaders and practitioners. Leaders of local government, children's social care and social services, National Police Chiefs' Council, police and crime commissioners, the Crown Prosecution Service, the Magistrates' Association and health commissioning bodies should be involved.
7. Each concordat should build upon the quality standards for residential children's care by encouraging the training of all carers, police and the wider children's social care and social services workforce to engage with children and young people in a positive, understanding and respectful way, using formal and informal approaches to build relationships and a sense of community, support social development and respond effectively to challenging behaviour, avoiding formal criminal justice processes wherever possible. This has been done successfully in some areas through the use of restorative practice (see page 28).

8. Each concordat should make clear that, in developing their joint working protocols to protect looked after children and young people from criminalisation, lead members, corporate parenting boards and chief constables should ensure that they address the particular needs of children and young people in care who are black or from other minority ethnic groups, and those of Muslim children and young people in care. This should include:
- (a) Ensuring that looked after children and young people who are black or from other minority ethnic backgrounds, and those of Muslim faith, are consulted at both an individual and collective level about their experiences in the care and criminal justice system and matters that affect them, and using this information to help ensure their needs are met and that they are fairly treated
 - (b) Conducting regular equality analyses about the numbers and proportions of children and young people in care who are black or from other minority ethnic groups, and those of Muslim faith, and who become involved with the criminal justice system and developing plans to address any disproportionality
 - (c) Ensuring that staff and police officers undergo continuing professional development to challenge negative stereotypes and ensure the fair treatment of looked after children and young people who are black or from other minority ethnic backgrounds, or of Muslim faith
 - (d) Ensuring that looked after children and young people who are black or from other minority ethnic groups, or of Muslim faith, who are at risk of criminalisation can access support and advice from peer mentors and positive role models from their own communities.
9. These joint working protocols should also be aimed at ensuring through consultation with children and young people, regular equality analyses, continuing professional development and the use of peer mentors, that the protection of children and young people in care from criminalisation is gender-sensitive; in particular, that girls in care are protected from child sexual exploitation and that negative stereotypes about girls subject to child sexual exploitation are challenged.
10. These joint working protocols should also be aimed at ensuring through consultation with children and young people, regular equality analyses and continuing professional development, that the protection of children and young people in care from criminalisation takes full account of children and young people's disabilities and speech, language and communication needs. This will require:
- (a) Awareness raising and training amongst all professionals who come into contact with looked after children and young people who are at risk of criminalisation, including carers, social workers, teachers and health professionals, as well as the police, Crown Prosecution Service, lawyers, judges and magistrates and secure establishments
 - (b) Such training to be aimed at ensuring professionals are able to identify possible underlying developmental disabilities and disorders, learning disabilities and learning difficulties, and speech, language and communication needs, and ensuring that they know how to engage effectively with children and young people displaying signs of underlying conditions or additional needs
 - (c) More effective communication between children's social care, health, education and criminal justice agencies to ensure that information is passed on about children's known conditions and needs and that this information is taken into account in the treatment of children and young people and decisions that affect them
 - (d) Improved access to specialist services and support where it is needed.

Appendix Two

Review members

Chair

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Laming CBE DL

Review members (in alphabetical order)

Caroline Adams – Staff Officer for National Children & Young Persons Portfolio - National Police Chiefs Council representing Olivia Pinkney QPM, Chief Constable of Hampshire
John Bache – Deputy Chairman – Magistrates Association
Sally Bartolo – Peer Outreach Team Manager – Education and Youth Team – Greater London Authority
Tim Bateman - Principal Policy Advisor (Youth Justice), Children’s Commissioner for England
Ben Byrne – Association of Youth Offending Team Managers (England)
Stuart Carlton – Board Member – Association of Directors of Children’s Services
Teresa Clarke – Governor – HM Young Offender Institution, Swinfen Hall and NOMS Care Leavers’ Champion
Jeremy Crook – Director – Black Training and Enterprise Group
Darren Coyne – Project Manager – Care Leavers’ Association
Natasha Finlayson – Chief Executive – Who Cares? Trust
Shauneen Lambe – Executive Director – Just for Kids Law
Lord McNally – Chair – Youth Justice Board for England and Wales
Mary O’Grady – Chair – YOT Managers Cymru
Elizabeth Rantzen – Trustee – Prison Reform Trust
Nigel Richardson - Director of Children’s Services -Leeds City Council
Councillor David Simmonds – Chair of Local Government Association’s Children and Young Persons’ Board
Enver Solomon – Director of Evidence and Impact – National Children’s Bureau
Dr Jo Staines – Director BSc Childhood Studies Programme – Hadley Centre for Adoption and Foster Care Studies, Bristol University
Chris Stanley – Trustee – Michael Sieff Foundation
Professor Mike Stein – Research Professor - Social Policy Research Unit, University of York
Baroness Lola Young – Crossbench Peer - House of Lords

In addition, eight young people aged 14 to 23 years, with experience of care and the criminal justice system, were full members of the review panel.

Prison Reform Trust staff and pro bono assistance

John Drew CBE (Secretary to the care review)
Justin Elder (Executive assistant)
Juliet Lyon CBE (Director)
Katy Swaine Williams (Care review co-ordinator)
Dr Pamela Storey (Pro bono researcher) (formerly of Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London)
Grace Wyld (Volunteer)

About the review

The extraordinary response to this review demonstrates the strength of feeling amongst young people, parents and professionals alike, that we can and must do better in helping children in care to stay out of trouble. We join them in calling for the protection of children in care from criminalisation to be given high priority at national level and by all relevant local agencies. The evidence shows that strong leadership leads to clear results.

Terms of reference

In April 2015 Lord Laming accepted the Prison Reform Trust's invitation to chair an independent review of looked after children in the criminal justice system in England and Wales, 'Keeping children in care out of trouble'. The review was launched in June 2015 with this central question:

to consider the over representation of children in care, or with experience of care, in the youth justice system - why, for example, when only fewer than 1% of children and young people are committed to the care of local authorities³⁰, yet a third of boys and 61% of girls in custody are, or have been, in care³¹ - and to make recommendations as to how the life opportunities for children and young people in care or with experience of care, who are at risk of being avoidably drawn into the youth justice system, can be transformed.³²

It was agreed that the review would:

- a) bring together a group of young people who are, or have recently been, in care to consult them about the review and, throughout its course, to ensure that the review benefits from their insight and knowledge;
- b) seek evidence from children and young people, family members and carers, and relevant professional bodies;
- c) produce an accurate count of the number of children in custody in England and Wales who are, or have been, in care;
- d) summarise the research published, and currently being undertaken, in this area;
- e) capture international evidence of good practice;
- f) identify current best practice in England and Wales to inform the review;
- g) make recommendations for national government, including its Inspectorates, to consider;
- h) make recommendations for local authority lead members for children's and social services, directors of children's and social services and other relevant agencies to consider; and
- i) publish and disseminate findings and recommendations and work to ensure they are implemented.

Lord Laming invited a broad range of senior practitioners and experts in children's social care and youth justice to join the review panel (see page 23). The review panel members have drawn on their considerable experience and knowledge to advise the review. A children and young people's consultation group was also established whose eight members aged 14 to 23 years, all with experience of care and the criminal justice system, were also review panel members.

Work from June 2015 to April 2016

The review was launched with a call for evidence on 23 June 2015. The launch received widespread media coverage, including 500 individual broadcast stories and 50 offers of help and commitments to provide evidence on the first day alone. Over 220 written submissions have since been received from a wide range of agencies and individuals with personal or professional experience of care and the criminal justice system.

The review panel includes social workers, police, magistrates, academics and other experts, as well as children and young people who have been in care and been in trouble with the law. The panel held regular meetings between June 2015 and April 2016 to hear oral evidence and advise on findings and recommendations. The young review panel members were included in these meetings and also held their own additional working sessions.

Review panel members heard oral evidence at further meetings and during visits to agencies and establishments, at national conferences and in regional forums of practitioners and policy makers. A number of requests were received from individuals to meet the review panel to talk about their personal experiences of care and the criminal justice system. These requests were met where possible. We also held three focus groups with young people in custody and in the community.

In August 2015, Lord Laming wrote to the chief executives of all local authorities in England and Wales to find out the numbers and proportions of looked after children who had offended or were in custody, regardless of how long they had been in care (in other words, not limited to those in care for at least 12 months). Over 90 local authorities (60% of the total) provided the data requested and this has been analysed alongside data from other available sources.

Review panel member Dr Jo Staines of the Hadley Centre for Adoption and Foster Care Studies, School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol was commissioned to produce an independent literature review to accompany this review's findings, with generous support from the Hadley Trust.

Findings and recommendations

We have taken as our starting point the evidence received from all these sources, with a particular emphasis on what we have been told by children and young people in care and those who have recently left care. The result is neither a piece of academic research nor a policy document. Rather, the full review report (of which this is a summary) is a distillation of the views and experiences of over 260 people with past or present experience of growing up in care or working with children and young people in care and in the criminal justice system, and other experts and organisations working in relevant fields. Where permission is available, the review's written submissions will be made available on the Prison Reform Trust website as an additional resource. Dr Jo Staines' independent literature review, 'Risk, adverse influence and criminalisation: Understanding the over-representation of looked after children in the youth justice system' offers a further resource for academics and practitioners.

Key facts

Looked after children - characteristics and outcomes

There were 75,155 looked after children on 31 March 2015 in England and Wales.³³

The majority of looked after children – 61% in both England and Wales – are looked after by the state due to abuse or neglect. Only a very small fraction of children become looked after for socially unacceptable behaviour, 2% in England and 4% in Wales. This category could include offending.

Three-quarters of looked after children in England and Wales are in foster care. Children and young people living in children's homes (not including secure), residential care homes and hostels constitute 11% of the total in England.

Of all children in care in England on 31 March 2015, 67% (46,690) had one placement during the year, 23% had two placements and 10% had three or more placements. Figures for Wales show slightly greater stability, with 71% (3,960) children having one placement during the year, 20% having two placements and 9% having three or more placements.³⁴

In 2015, 14% of looked after children in England achieved five or more A*-C GCSEs or equivalent, including English and mathematics. This compares to 53% of children in the general population and 15% of children in need.³⁵

In 2015, 61% of looked after children in England had a special educational need, compared to 50% of children in need and 15% of all children.³⁶

37% of looked after children in England have emotional and behavioural health that is considered to be a cause for concern, and a further 13% are considered borderline.³⁷

Looked after children in the criminal justice system

94% of children in care in England do not get in trouble with the law. However children in care in England are six times more likely to be cautioned or convicted of an offence than other children.³⁸

The review's survey of local authorities found that children in care who come to police attention may have a higher risk of being convicted as opposed to being cautioned compared to other children.³⁹

There is no reliable data on the numbers of looked after children in custody. Based on data from a number of sources we estimate that approximately 400 looked after children are in custody at any one time, of whom about 100 will be being held on remand; this is slightly less than half the current total number of children in custody.⁴⁰

Looked after children in custody show greater levels of mental health need (as a group) compared to other incarcerated children, receive less emotional and practical support and have worse outcomes in areas such as responding to behaviour incentive schemes and resettlement planning.⁴¹

In the most recent survey by the Prisons Inspectorate, children in secure training centres who said they were or had been in local authority care were:⁴²

- Less likely than their peers to say that they had visits from family, carers or friends at least once a week (34% compared with 61%)
- Less likely than their peers to say that they knew where they would be living when they left the centre (52% compared with 89%)
- More likely than their peers to say that they had been physically restrained during their time at the STC (45% compared with 29%)
- More likely than their peers to say that they had felt threatened or intimidated by other children while at the centre (25% compared with 10%).

Boys in young offender institutions who said that they were, or had been, in local authority care.⁴³

- Were twice as likely to consider themselves to have a disability (26% compared with 13%)
- Were significantly more likely to have been placed on a minor report (59% compared with 40%), been adjudicated against (74% compared with 61%) and been physically restrained (48% compared with 36%)
- Reported higher rates of emotional or mental health problems (37% compared with 16%)
- Were more likely to say they felt unsafe at the time of the inspection (17% compared with 11%) and that they had experienced victimisation by a member of staff (29% compared with 22%)
- Were significantly less likely to have had one or more visits per week from family and friends (23% compared with 43%).

Based on unpublished data made available to the review by the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, 44% of looked after children in custody are from an ethnic minority background, which is more than one and a half times the proportions in the general population and the looked after population.

Cost of care placements

In 2012-13, authorities spent £1.5 billion on fostering services and £1 billion on residential care.⁴⁴

The average annual spend on a foster placement for a child is £29,000-33,000; for a residential placement it is £131,000-135,000.⁴⁵

£142.4 million was spent on secure accommodation for children in 2013-14.⁴⁶ This compares to £224 million in 2012-13.⁴⁷ The average cost per annum of secure accommodation by placement type 2013-14 breaks down as follows: secure training centre, £187,000; secure children's home, £209,000 and under-18 young offender institution, £60,000.⁴⁸

Good practice examples

Surrey County Council and Surrey Police have reduced the numbers of looked after children in the criminal justice system year on year since 2011 through close, joint strategic working. Their work is based on a multi-agency strategy to reduce offending by looked after children, supported by an inter-agency protocol, a steering group and regular forums for practitioners, as well as an extensive, multi-agency training and development programme on restorative practice, including training for foster carers. They also cite ‘transformation’ of Surrey youth justice, in particular through the introduction of the Youth Restorative Intervention (YRI)⁴⁹ and joint decision-making by the youth support service and police. An independent evaluation found that £3.41 has been saved for every £1 invested in the YRI and concluded that:

*the YRI reduced the unnecessary criminalisation of young people, reduced reoffending, provided better interventions for victims, improved victim satisfaction and reduced costs to the youth justice system.*⁵⁰

Leeds City Council is working towards a whole city restorative approach, incorporating not just children’s social work services but also wider children’s services, education settings and beyond as an integral part of the Leeds approach to better outcomes for children and families. Other areas of their work include partnership working with the Care Leavers’ Association on the Clear Approach programme, a focus on ‘Best Start’ and ‘Early Help’ and Family Group Conferencing and investment in reunification, including through the Multi-Systemic Therapy Family Integrated Transitions programme. In the year ending October 2015, Leeds saw a reduction in the percentage of children and young people known to the youth justice service who were looked after, from 13% to 10.5%. This represented a reduction in the percentage of looked after children in Leeds who were known to the youth justice service, from 7.6% to 5.4%.

Leicestershire City Council: In Leicestershire, following concern about the number of young people getting involved in the youth justice system, mainly for low level offences, a programme of restorative justice was introduced from 2007-2010 to establish a restorative approach across the children’s homes in the county, to enable the staff in the homes to manage low level behaviour without recourse to the police.⁵¹ An independent evaluation found that there was a substantial reduction in convictions and offences committed by children and young people both inside and outside homes.⁵² Ongoing work includes attempting to engage private children’s homes in this agenda.

Staffordshire Police: Close joint working by Staffordshire Police with local care homes has led to a reduction in missing episodes for looked after children in the area⁵³, a known contributing factor to criminalisation.⁵⁴ Key to this work has been the allocation of a named police officer to each residential home, and the expectation that they visit as part of their general duties, whether there is a specific problem or not.

Gwent: In Gwent a protocol has been agreed and implemented to reduce the prosecution of looked after children. The protocol is underpinned by training in the use of restorative

approaches where this is a safe and appropriate response to challenging behaviour by looked after children and young people. The aim of the protocol is to reduce the number of looked after children being arrested for minor offences that would not have come to police attention if the children had been living at home with their parents. The programme also offers training and support to foster carers and residential unit staff, and should also stabilise placements.⁵⁵

Norfolk: In Norfolk, the number of young people in care who became involved in the criminal justice system dropped by 52% two years after the implementation of county-wide restorative practice in children's homes. The scheme was introduced in 2009 and saw 100 staff trained in restorative practice. The number of young people in care who were charged with a criminal offence over the next two years fell from 7.2% in 2009 to 3.4% in 2011.⁵⁶

Hertfordshire: There was a 23% reduction in police call outs during the three years following the implementation of restorative practice in care homes by Hertfordshire County Council, compared to the previous three years.⁵⁷

Waltham Forest, London: A jointly funded Looked After Children/Youth Offending Service post in Waltham Forest ensures a clear joined up approach for looked after children known to the youth offending service. The postholder also reviews 'at risk' looked after children and works to reduce risk. This model was identified as an example of good practice in HM Inspectorate of Probation's Short Quality Screening Inspection 2015. In Waltham Forest, restorative justice training is completed with care home staff and foster carers who look after children in the care of the local authority, with the aim of reducing criminalisation. The Youth Offending Service and Children's Social Care team work together to deliver restorative justice with young people and care home staff to reduce placement breakdown. Restorative intervention officers have been introduced in schools to reduce criminalisation and absenteeism.

Endnotes

- 1 Oral evidence session, 25 June 2015
- 2 Prime Minister's party conference speech, October 2015: <http://press.conservatives.com/post/130746609060/prime-minister-conference-speech-2015>
- 3 Many of the review's findings and recommendations are reflected in the requirements of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its protocols. Some are reflected in the findings of the 2014 Independent Inquiry into the Operation and Effectiveness of the Youth Court, chaired by Lord Carlile.
- 4 Mackie, A. et al. *Youth Restorative Evaluation Summary Report* (2014) GtD Social Impact Analytics
- 5 National Police Chiefs' Council (2015) *National Strategy for the Policing of Children and Young People*, London: NPCC
- 6 Submission 55
- 7 The cabinet sub-committee should have senior ministerial representation from all relevant government departments, including the Department for Education, Home Office, Ministry of Justice, Department of Health and Department for Communities and Local Government.
- 8 See Appendix One for further guidance on the proposed concordat on protecting looked after children from criminalisation.
- 9 The relevant inspectorates are Ofsted (in England) and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales and Estyn (in Wales).
- 10 Department for Education (January 2016) *Children's social care reform: A vision for change*, London: DfE
- 11 http://www.ncb.org.uk/media/1237461/one_year_on_report_final_copy.pdf
- 12 Submission 96
- 13 Submission 10
- 14 Young women's focus group 7 March 2016
- 15 Submission 20
- 16 Department for Education (2015) *The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations. Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review*, London: DfE
- 17 This is also reflected in the Care Leavers' Association's recommendations to government which identify the need for a 'cultural change in the understanding of, and responses to, looked after children and care leavers in the criminal justice system': www.careleavers.com
- 18 The Restorative Justice Council explains: "*In any setting involving children and young people, restorative approaches teach an understanding of others' feelings and the ability to connect and communicate successfully. They enable young people to think for themselves about how to respond to challenging situations, and to build trust and develop more mature responses to a difficult situation...*" (Submission 139)
- 19 Submission 208 - Black Training and Enterprise Group
- 20 Submission 223 - Imkaan
- 21 Young women's focus group, 7 March 2016
- 22 Submission 47
- 23 Submission 224 - Aylish Alexander Solicitors, concerning a young man from Congo who came to the UK as a young child, started offending while in care in England, and whom they are representing in an application to revoke an order for his deportation to Congo due to criminality. See the full review report for his story.
- 24 Submission 212 - Philippa Southwell, Birds solicitors
- 25 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/review-of-racial-bias-and-bame-representation-in-criminal-justice-system-announced>
- 26 See the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders.
- 27 Submission 76
- 28 Submission 51
- 29 Statutory guidance for local authorities in England on looked after children and youth justice recognises the increased likelihood of looked after children becoming criminalised. The guidance states that local authorities should to take a strategic approach to encouraging positive behaviour amongst looked after children who may be at risk of offending and to take measures to divert them from involvement with the criminal justice system. It recommends that children's homes should have protocols with local police forces to prevent children in their care from being 'needlessly criminalised'. (Department for Education (2014) *Looked after children and youth justice. Application of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 to looked after children in contact with youth justice services*, London: DfE) These principles are reflected in the Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the Quality Standards (Para 8.5, Department for Education (2015) *Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the Quality Standards*, London: DfE)
- 30 Department for Education (2013) *Children looked after in England year ending 31 March 2013*, London: DfE, StatsWales website, and Office for National Statistics (2013) *Population estimates total persons for England and Wales and regions Mid-1971 to Mid-2012*, London: ONS
- 31 Kennedy, E. (2013) *Children and Young People in Custody 2012-13: An analysis of 15-18-year-olds' perceptions of their*

-
- experiences in young offender institutions, London: HM Inspectorate of Prisons and Youth Justice Board.
- 32 These terms of reference were drawn from the statistics referred to above, which were the most recent available at the time of the review's launch. In its findings from 774 surveys completed by children at every secure training centre and young offender institution which were all inspected between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015, HM Inspectorate of Prisons has since reported that over half the children in STCs (52%) and almost two-fifths of boys in YOs (38%) told the Inspectorate that they had been or were in local authority care. Redmond, A. (2015) *Children in Custody 2014-15: An analysis of 12-18-year-olds' perceptions of their experience in secure training centres and young offender institutions*, London: HMIP, YJB.
- 33 Statistics throughout this section, unless otherwise stated, are from the following sources. England: Department for Education (2015) *Statistical First Release SFR 34/2015*, London: DfE; Wales: Welsh Government (2015) *StatsWales, Children Looked After*, Cardiff: Welsh Government
- 34 England - Department for Education (2015) *Statistical First Release SFR 34/2015*, London: DfE. There has been a slight change in methodology this year, whereby a child going missing from his/her agreed placement is no longer counted as a separate placement in 2015. Whilst this means the figures for 2015 are not strictly comparable with earlier years, the percentages with 1, 2, 3 or more placements have changed relatively little compared with previous years, suggesting the impact of the methodology change is minimal. Wales - Welsh Government (2015) *StatsWales, Children Looked After*, Cardiff: Welsh Government
- 35 Department for Education (2016) *Statistical First Release 11/2016*. Changes to the way these figures are calculated means comparisons with earlier years are not possible.
- 36 Department for Education (2016) *Statistical First Release 11/2016*
- 37 Department for Education (2015) *Children looked after in England (including adoption and care leavers), year ending 31 March 2015: additional tables*, London: Department for Education. These figures are based on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire. The SDQ should be completed for every child looked after for at least 12 months and aged 5 to 16 years-old as at the end of March. In 2015 there were 36,140 children in this cohort and 72% of these had an SDQ score returned.
- 38 Department for Education (2015) *Statistical First Release SFR 34/2015*, London: DfE
- 39 Review's survey of local authorities August 2015 to March 2016; *YJB Gateway to the Youth Justice System* Chapter 1, Table 1.1 Flows through the youth justice system year ending March 2015
- 40 See the full review report for commentary. See also Redmond, A. (2015)
- 41 Redmond, A. (2015) *Children in Custody 2014-15: An Analysis of 12-18 year olds' perceptions of their experience in secure training centres and young offender institutions*, London: HM Inspectorate of Prisons Ibid
- 42 Ibid
- 43 Ibid
- 44 Comptroller and Auditor General's Report, *Children in Care*, HC 787, Session 2014-15, 27 November 2014
- 45 Ibid
- 46 Youth Justice Board (2015) *Annual Report and Accounts 2014/15*, London: Youth Justice Board
- 47 Youth Justice Board (2013) *Annual Report and Accounts 2012/13*, London: Youth Justice Board
- 48 Hansard HC, 27 June 2013, c368W
- 49 The Youth Restorative Intervention is a pre-court disposal which is an alternative to the youth caution, youth conditional caution and prosecution and is described in an individual story in the full report.
- 50 Mackie, A. et al. *Youth Restorative Evaluation Summary Report* (2014) GtD Social Impact Analytics
- 51 Submission 14 - Leicestershire County Council
- 52 Submission 14; Knight, V. et al (2011) *Evaluation of the Restorative Approaches Project in Children's Residential Homes across Leicestershire: Final Report 2011*, Leicester: De Montfort University
- 53 Oral evidence session, 10 September 2015
- 54 See also Department for Education (2014) *Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care*, London: Department for Education
- 55 Submission 196 - Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly youth offending service
- 56 Community Care – Restorative justice cuts criminalisation and police intervention among looked after children. Cited in Submission 139 – Restorative Justice Council
- 57 Littlechild, B. et al (2010) *The introduction of restorative justice approaches in young people's residential units: A critical evaluation*, London: University of Hertfordshire; cited in Submission 139 – Restorative Justice Council

Acknowledgments

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We would like to thank all those who took the time to provide written and oral evidence to the review. We are particularly grateful to those who shared their personal experiences of care and the criminal justice system and those of close family members.

We are grateful to the review panel members for their knowledge and commitment. In particular we would like to thank the children and young people's consultation group who have made a profound contribution. For their assistance in supporting young people's involvement in the review, we thank Darren Coyne of the Care Leavers' Association, Emma Corbett of the Who Cares? Trust, Sally Bartolo and the Greater London Authority peer outreach team, Greg Nicholas of Cardiff Council, Liz Ibeziako, Barnardo's, the Big House Theatre Company, the Black Training and Enterprise Group and HMPYOI Feltham.

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We thank the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, HM Inspectorate of Prisons and the Department for Education for assisting with the analysis of data on looked after children in the criminal justice system, and we also thank the Youth Justice Board for facilitating the review's evidence sessions at the 2015 Youth Justice Convention. Thanks go to the National Police Chiefs Council for helping us to gather evidence from police forces through written submissions and at their 2016 conference on the police response to children and young people. We thank Penny Hall, Huw Gwyn Jones and Sarah Cooper of the Welsh Government for their expertise and practical help.

Finally, we thank all those who hosted visits and held meetings with review panel members and supported the review in other ways, all of whom have helped to make this report a positive force for change.



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The Prison Reform Trust is an independent UK charity working to create a just, humane and effective penal system. It does this by inquiring into the workings of the system; informing prisoners, staff and the wider public; and by influencing Parliament, government and officials towards reform.

From 2007 to 2012 the Prison Reform Trust's Out of Trouble programme, generously supported by the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund, worked with some success to help reduce the numbers of children in custody in England and Wales. As part of that programme, the Prison Reform Trust commissioned research into the views of looked after children on the links between care, offending and custody. In 2015 the charity launched a major review chaired by Lord Laming to investigate the disproportionate numbers of children in care who were in custody and to make recommendations for reform.

The review's full report (of which this is a summary) has been prepared by Katy Swaine Williams, the review's co-ordinator, in consultation with John Drew who is secretary to the review. The report is accompanied by a literature review which is available from the Prison Reform Trust: 'Risk, adverse influence and criminalisation: Understanding the over representation of looked after children in the youth justice system' by Dr Jo Staines, Hadley Centre for Adoption and Foster Care Studies, School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol.

What LINX Have Been Doing.....

**Having one LINX
meeting per month and
other focused meetings
has been working well.
We prefer knowing
what we are meeting
about**



The LINX Facebook group continues to grow





3 members of LINX attended the Barnardo's National Care Leavers Forum in Birmingham



**One member of
LINX attended
the Five to Thrive
training with her
young son**

LINX continues to attend the Post Ofsted Inspection Improvement Plan meetings



**Work with Uclan on
Stories 2 Connect With
continues, with young
people collecting stories
from other young people
with experience of foster
care**



**7 members of LINX
attended a foster carer
forum in Burnley to talk
about the work of LINX**

**This led to a request for
a drop in session in
Burnley for any
interested new
members, which has
gone ahead**

One member of LINX presented at a conference for foster carers at Woodlands to tackle the barriers of fostering teenagers



**A Task Group of LINX have
begun working with
Lancashire County Council
Fostering services including
writing a letter for
Lancashire's Children entering
Care**

**4 members of LINX have
been planning the
Barnardo's 150th Summer
Fayre which took place
last Saturday**

**The 4 members were
stewards on the day and
one member of LINX
gave a speech and
opened the Fayre with
our Regional Director
Lynn Perry**



**We have had one
primary participation
day during the May
half term**



One member of LINX attended an All Party Parliamentary Group Meeting at the House of Lords to discuss Children's Social Care

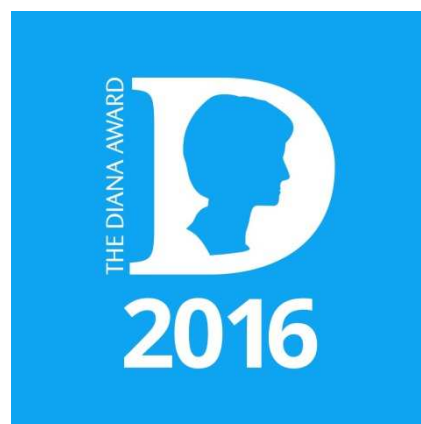




Two members of LINX attended a session at Westminster with Ed Timpson MP and the Children's Commissioner to discuss a bill around Children's Social Care



Young Inspectors have been awarded a Diana Award



1 member of LINX attended an event at Woodlands for prospective social workers and gave out lots of information about the service. From this an IRO has invited LINX to their next Service Development day in September

The End



Children Looked After Young Inspectors Update June 2016



May 2016

There are currently 14 trained members
of the Children Looked After Young
Inspectors Team

The Young Inspectors visit

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

Since the last Corporate Parenting Board Meeting 6 weeks ago the young inspectors have all come together to meet two times



At these meetings the young inspectors have written up revisit reports to the following agency fostering providers



SWISS Foster Care

Foster Care Associates



They have also written up the reports for a revisit to a private residential unit in East Lancashire



All 3 reports will be sent back to the providers by the end of June



One revisit to an agency
residential unit in East
Lancashire was postponed as
there were no young people
available to speak to



The Young Inspectors have written and returned their report following their visit to the Chief Executive of Barnardo's



There were 8 recommendations to Javed Khan including:

Pledge a commitment to have input from young people at all Senior Leaders Conferences.

Continue with the plan, as outlined by Javed, to develop the Participation Strategy and the voice of children and young people at all levels. Make this more powerful by linking and talking to existing groups

Create time for Javed and other senior leaders to meet with children and young people

In May 2016 LINX Young
Inspectors were nominated for
a Diana Award for their
contributions to shaping
services for Looked After
Children



June 10th we found out that
their nomination was
successful and all 14
members will be presented
with their award certificate
shortly



County Councillor Sue Prynn Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board praises the achievements of the Young Inspectors...

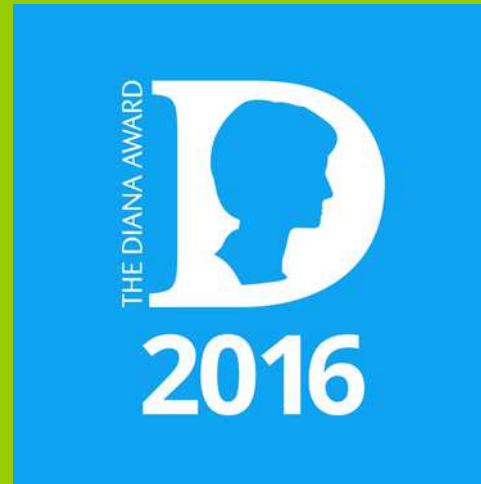
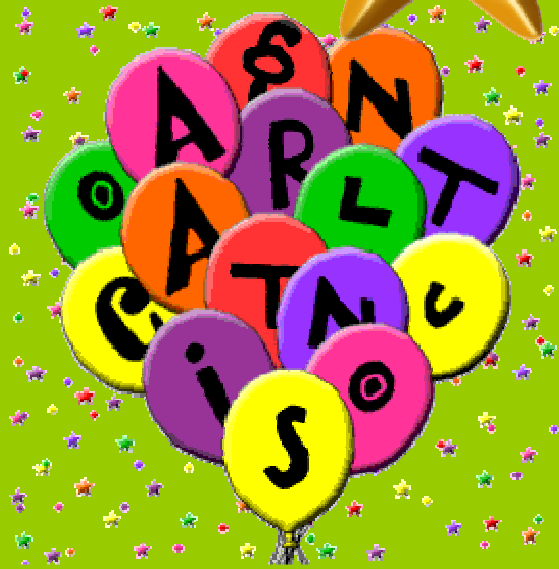


‘Thank you for notifying us of such an amazing achievement.

The Young Inspectors undertake incredibly valuable work and are a huge asset to the council and to the young people in our care.

I am always humbled by their actions and feel they have much to teach all of us!’

THANK
YOU



What do Care Leavers in Lancashire tell us they need?

Housing choices: Information about: My rights My choices Support signing up to websites Support visiting properties Support at the housing office	Moving in: How to pay council tax, TV licence, rent, being a good tenant	Money/ debt: Benefits
Living at the house Help with how to pay bills, do the shopping and cooking Support to look after my emotional wellbeing	Maintenance: What does this mean?	Area What transport is available It would be good to walk around the area What is around the local area such as shops, a post office or bank I will need to register with a doctor and a dentist

What do Care Leavers in Lancashire tell us is most important to them?

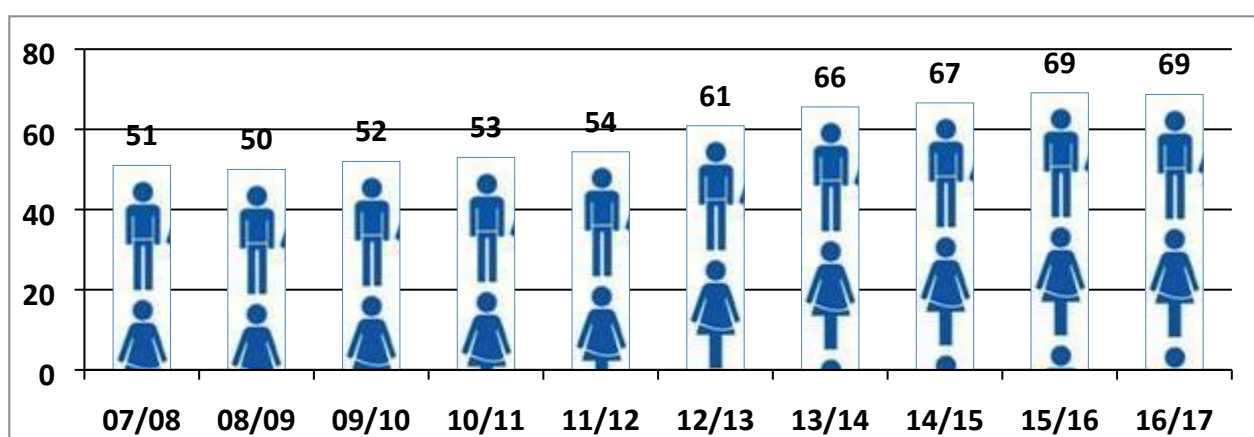
Most Important	What does a tenancy agreement mean?
	What if I have a problem? e.g. broken pipe or boiler etc
	How much money will I have?
	How will I sort out debts and manage my money?
Middle	Where will I go shopping and what will I buy?
	How and what will I cook?
	How can I take care of my emotional wellbeing?
Least Important	How do I register with a dentist or doctor?
	How will I get to know the local area?
	How will I get around my local area?

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD PERFORMANCE REPORT, JUNE 2016

ACTIVITY FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AND CARE LEAVERS

NUMBER OF CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER

- As at the end of May 2016, there are **1,681** children looked after in Lancashire.
- For every **10,000** children and young people in Lancashire, **68.7** are currently looked after.
- The current number of children looked increased in May and is higher than 12 months ago (May 15 - 1542)
- 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 further increased in May after a fall in April. There have been big increases in the number of looked after children over the last two years. The rate further increased in 2015/16 to 69 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
	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	2016/17 (YTD Ave.)
Contacts <i>per month</i>	1284	1525	750	1575	1788	1824
Referrals <i>per month</i>	1175	1370	1679	868	958	896
Initial Assessments	9891	11288	11865	-	-	-
Core Assessments	5019	5901	5724	-	-	-
Single Assessment started <i>per month</i>	--	--	--	1089	1253	1277

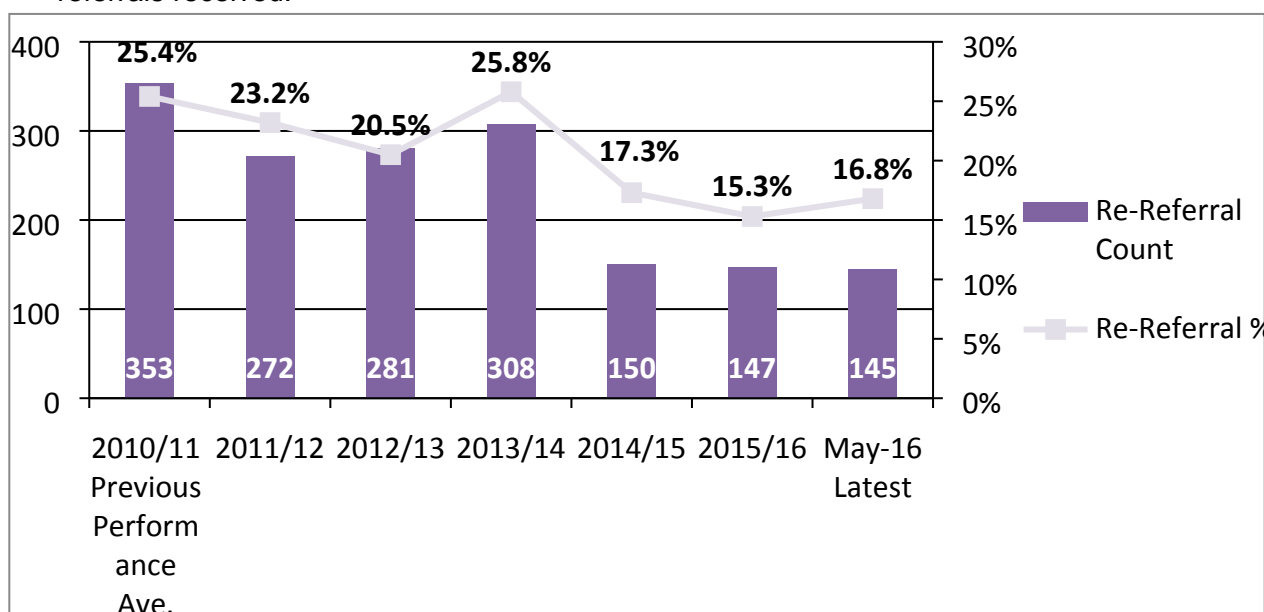
COMMENTS:

- ❖ 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 full year shows an average of 1089 assessments were started per month. The second full year shows a 15% rise, with an average of 1253 assessments starting 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 2015/16 decreased to **less than 16** 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 was **16.8%** in May 2016.
- ❖ Re-referral rates have stayed below **20%** for 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 March 2016 shows that **6** out of 100 children looked after have moved twice or more which is good performance and within the target, albeit a slight increase from January's figure.
- This is an almost unchanged position from 14/15 performance of **6.8%** but 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?
2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	March 16		
9.6%	6.8%	6.7%	6.7%	9.5%	

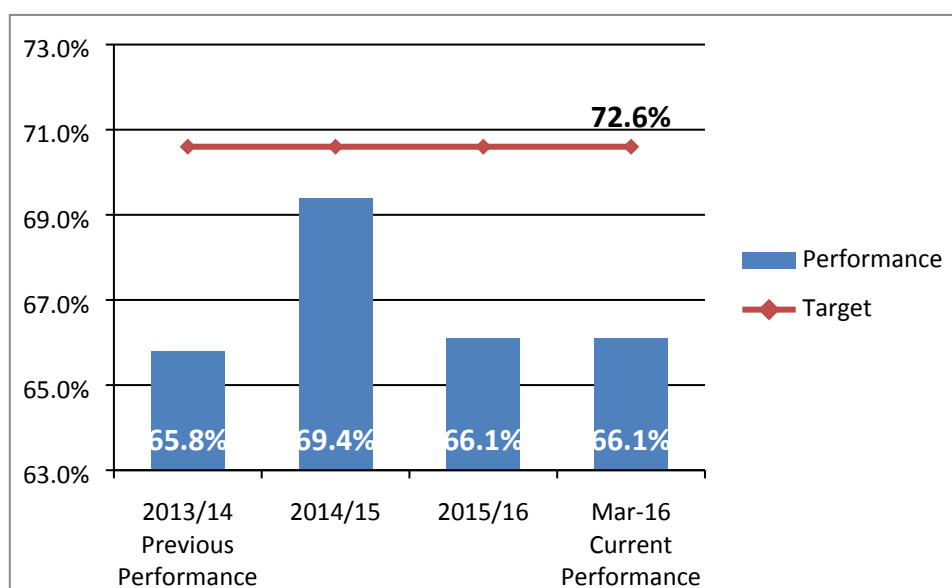
COMMENTS:

- ❖ Lancashire has carried out good placement stability work through research projects and improved processes, which has resulted in better performance and improved stability.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ May 2016 data not currently available due to system issues, hence March data provided.

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.
- March 2016 information shows that **66** out of 100 children looked are in a long and stable placement, which is good performance, but below our target.
- Current performance matches 2013/14 performance of **66** out of 100, but is below 2014/15 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%**.
- ❖ Performance reduced in 2015/16, down to 66.1% of CLA.
- ❖ As above, May 2016 data not currently available due to system issues, hence March data provided.

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 worked with multiple agencies including Lancashire Police, to monitor the levels of children missing from care and the yearly breakdowns below are based on that information. However, as of 2016, Lancashire County Council are now solely using LCS to report missing figures and are no longer checking police lists, hence the breakdowns will not be provided for every category going forwards.

	2013/14	2014/15	Q3 2015/16
Lancashire CLA missing	355	361	127
Number CLA from other LAs missing	355	365	-
Other Children known to Lancashire CSC	408	764	-
Other Children Missing	1338	742	-
Children Missing within Lancashire boundaries	2456	2222	522

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%	😞
	↘	↗	↘	↗	✗	

COMMENTS:

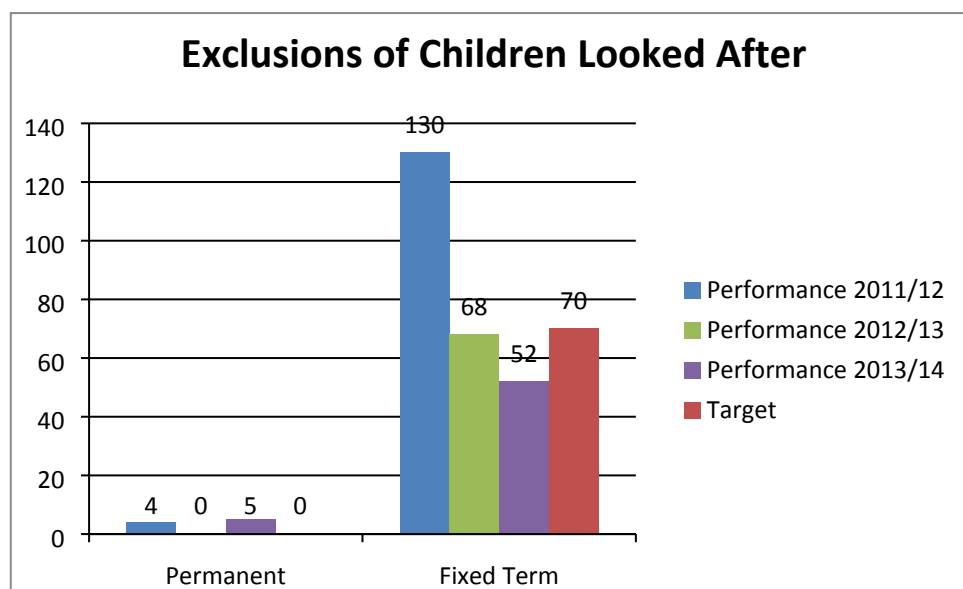
- ❖ Young people feel that the lower performance for secondary school pupils are a reflection of the increased age of these pupils and the free will exerted by those who are older leading them to miss school. The stress of placement moves and of being in care were also cited as reasons for non-attendance, 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?

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, **5** as at 31st May 2016.
- In Q4 14/15, just under 3 out of **100** children looked after were involved with the youth offending teams, whilst just under **1** out of **1000** children and young people were 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

- **91** out of 100 children looked after have an up-to-date health assessment (May 2016)
- This is a similar level of up-to-date health assessments than in the previous year (2015/16 - **92**)
- **70** out of 100 children looked after have an up-to-date dental assessment (May 2016)
- This has increased slightly after reaching a new year low in April 2016 of **67.8%**.

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 and dental assessments in partnership with health colleagues.
- ❖ 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.



ADOPTION AND PERMANENCE

ADOPTION ORDERS

- **323** children looked after have been adopted over the last 3 years.
- The number of adoptions increased to **119** children looked after being adopted in **15/16**, similar to **14/15** performance of **121**, but much higher than in previous years.



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:

- **149** looked after children were given a permanent home under special guardianship order during 15/16, up from **120** in 14/15.
- **10** looked after children were given a permanent home under residence order during 2015/16, a slight decrease on performance last year of **16**.

COMMENTS:

- ❖ Overall more children looked after than ever are being provided with a permanent home under adoption, special guardianship order or residence orders; **278** in 2015/16 which represents considerable success and further improvement on the previous record of **257** in 2014/15.

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":



- As at the end of March 2016, out of 100 care leavers, **87** are considered to be in suitable accommodation

COMMENTS:

- ❖ Performance as at the end of Q4 15/16 was **86.8%**
- ❖ 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:

- May 2015 data suggests **58.8%** of Care Leavers were in education, training or employment.
- Nationally **88** out of 100 young people aged 16-24 are in education, training or employment (March 2016)



COMMENTS:

- ❖ Latest performance suggests that 58.8% of care leavers are in education, training or employment.
- ❖ 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 retook 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.

We think the positives far
outweigh the barriers!

Barrier - We can have a surly exterior but underneath we are
people just like you

Now for the Positives!

We are not like babies – crying through the night, teething and being sick all the time. We don't have smelly nappies that need changing.



We are less demanding on your time than babies as we have the skills to be independent.

Unlike babies and small children we can speak and tell you how we are feeling.

We can be a positive influence on other children.

We can be adventurous and interested in lots of different things which may mean you will learn new things from us (e.g. skateboarding, technology)



We have a good understanding of technology and might be able to help you have a better understanding of things like social media, apps etc



We can offer help in doing household chores – helping to keep the home tidy

We like to try new things like activities. You might be encouraged to do the same

We can help younger children living in the house

Helping teenagers to grow into independent people can be a very different but very good experience.

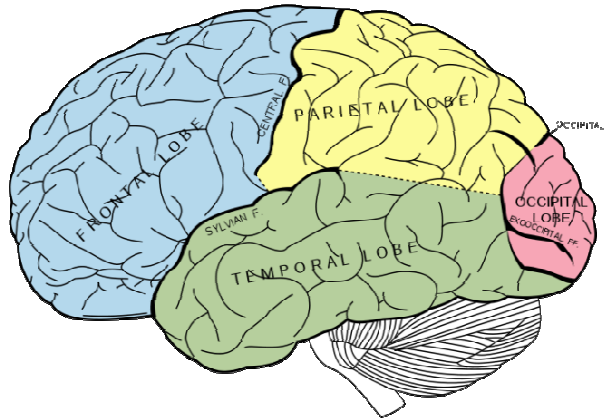
The quality of the relationships that you have is different and we have care leavers who stay in touch with foster carers throughout their lives

There are lots of assumptions about teenagers.
These include assumptions around how they
behave, react and what choices they make

What is really going on for teenagers??



When we become a teenager the brain
It changes and develops as much as when we
were a baby and a toddler



After this there will be so many
changes going on in our brains

When our brains are 'rewiring' we have like the ones when we were babies. It can take our brain a while to catch up with the changes

That's why teenagers can sometimes seem— we literally don't know where our bodies end!



For example we will reach for a glass based on where we think our arm ends, then realise we have already got to it and knocked it over

As we go through these changes we are starting to get to knowand who we are becoming as a person. We start to try outand new....., a bit like trying on new clothes in a shop to see if they fit and suit



We know that sometimes when we are trying out new things it can be for our parents and carers as they want to keep us safe

As well as going through all the changes in our brain and identity we also have addedfrom outside such as from friends and social media

Sometimes these pressures will make us make choices that you willwith and it will cause arguments and upset



This can be difficult in any family no matter how experienced the parents/carers are

‘Think of it as a type of....., where the green caterpillar of childhood disappears into the dark and secret cocoon of the teenager, finally to emerge as a beautiful adult butterfly’



Never

Difficult

New
Ideas

Ourselves

Clumsy

Pressures

Rewires

Experiences

Metamorphosis

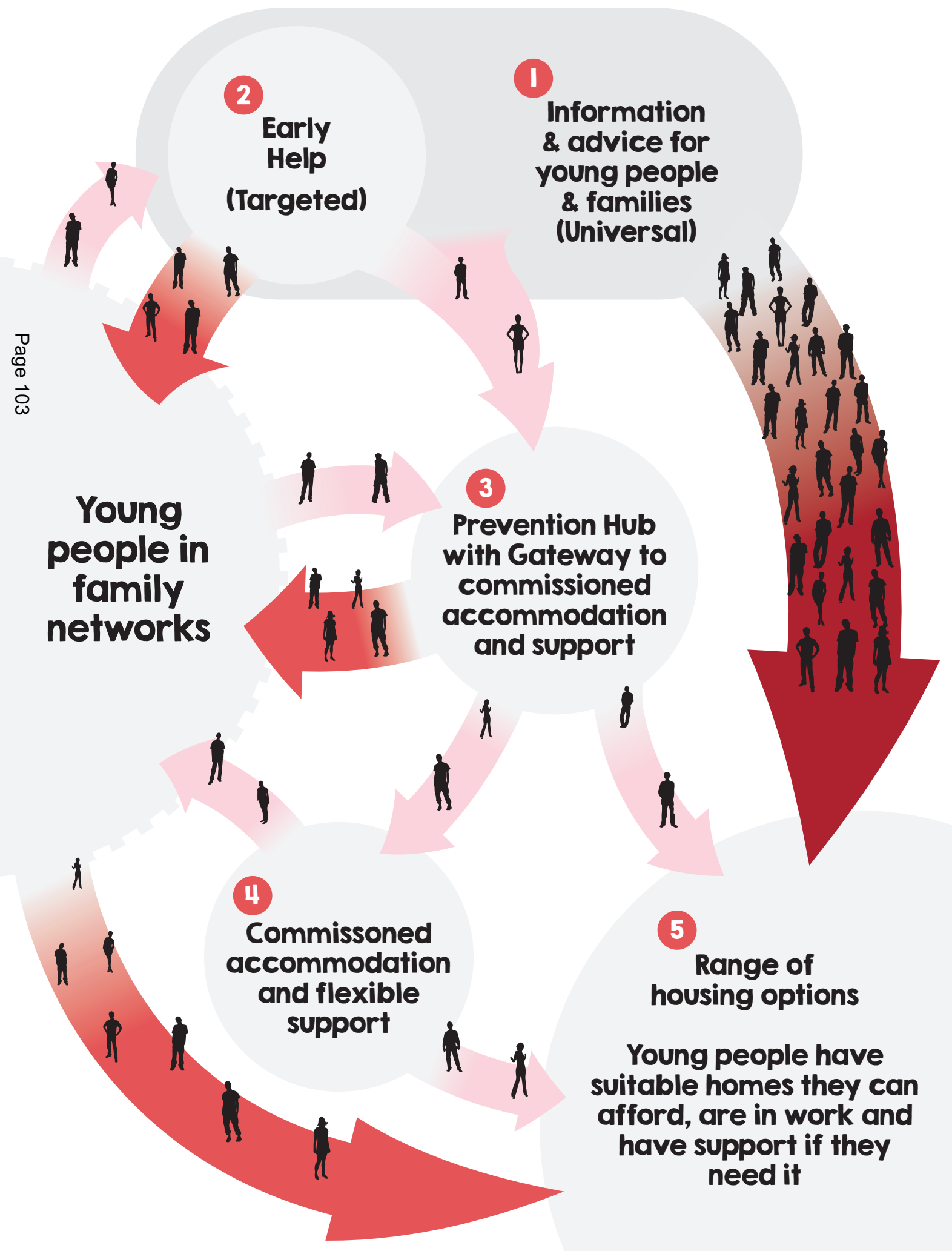
Growth Spurt

Disagree

POSITIVES OF FOSTERING TEENAGERS

FLIPCHART 1	FLIPCHART 2	FLIPCHART 3
Shopping Funny Days out Conversations you can have Good company Holidays Concerts Keep you up to date Teach us about technology Nice to see them grow and become confident Similar interests ie sport, tv, music Educate us as adults	Keep safe See develop Help achieve Support education Joint activities Teaching independence Shared interests More self-care skills Help through bad times More independent Physical independence Sticking with them Championing/believing in them Adult conversation	Rewarding Communication and interaction Can witness them blossom into an adult Can do more things together More independent Educational – can teach younger siblings Help with IT

Positive Pathway Model



Positive Pathway Framework: The 5 Service Areas

1 Information and advice for young people and families

The Service: Timely, accurate information and advice about housing options available to everyone, delivered in a range of ways including web-based information and through schools to reach young people, families and professionals.

Desired result: Young people and families are empowered to plan transitions to independent living without support from specialist services. They understand the links between housing choice and their financial end employment situation. They know where to get help if they need it.

2 Early help

The Service: Early intervention targeted to reach households where young people are most likely to be at risk of homelessness, in addition to 1). Delivery involving all local services working with young people and families at risk, e.g. Troubled Families programme, Family Support, Youth Support and Youth Offending Services.

Desired result: Young people stay in the family network where possible and safe and are supported to make planned moves if they need to move out.

3 Integrated response ('hub' or 'virtual hub') and gateway to commissioned accommodation and support

The Service: Led by the Housing Authority and Children's Services, an integrated service for young people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or need help with planned transitions to independence. Housing options and homelessness prevention services come together, often co-located, with other services including support for pathways into learning and work. Underpinned by assessment and including a needs driven gateway into commissioned supported accommodation and flexible housing related support services. Key data collection point to inform ongoing development of the pathway.

Desired results:

- Homelessness is prevented wherever possible, for example by supporting young people to stay in their family network or preventing the loss of a tenancy.
- Young people who need accommodation and/or support get it, including quick access emergency accommodation and immediate and ongoing support where needed.
- Young peoples' accommodation and support underpins rather than disrupts their pathways in learning and work.

4 Commissioned accommodation and support

The service: A range of accommodation and support options designed for younger and more vulnerable young people. Accommodation and support is linked together in some options, for example supported accommodation, Foyers, supported lodgings and Housing First. Flexible outreach support is also available to support young people wherever they live (including in the family home) and stick with them when they move if needed.

Desired results: Young people gain the stability and skills they need, engage with learning and work and move on to greater independence.

5 Range of Housing Options

The service: A range of safe, decent, affordable housing options, shared and self-contained, in the private, social and third sectors. Where the market doesn't provide sufficiently for young people on low incomes the offer will need to be shaped through local housing strategies, using partnerships to create options. May include creative approaches such as partnerships with learning providers and employers to provide dedicated accommodation that underpins participation in learning and work. Access to flexible outreach support (4) in case young people need it.

Desired results: Young people are economically active and have suitable homes that they can afford - they can build for their future.

Date: 5 July 2016

Dear Colleague,

Children and Social Work Bill

We are writing to let you know that we have published further information setting out in detail our plans for reforming the regulation of social work.

Part 2 of the Children and Social Work Bill outlines proposals for a new regulator for social workers. On Tuesday 28 June we published a policy statement and indicative draft regulations which you can find here:

http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2016-0569/Policy_Statement_Social_Work_Regulation_June_2016.pdf and here, respectively: http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2016-0569/Indicative_Social_Work_Regulations_England_June_2016_FINAL.pdf

Our proposals set out an ambitious reform agenda intended to establish a bespoke, sector specific regulator delivering a comprehensive regulatory framework with a strong focus on practice excellence and raising standards from initial education through to post qualification specialism and to key leadership roles.

We anticipate the new regulator will:

- Publish new professional standards, aligning with the Chief Social Workers' Knowledge and Skills statements;
- Set new standards for qualifying education and training, and reaccredit providers against these standards by 2020;
- Maintain a single register of social workers, annotating it to denote specialist accreditations;
- Set new, social work specific, standards for continuous professional development;
- Oversee a robust and transparent fitness to practise system;
- Approve post qualifying courses and training in specialisms such as Approved Mental Health Professionals and Best Interest Assessors;
- Oversee the proposed new assessment and accreditation system for child and family social workers;
- Oversee the required arrangements for successfully completing the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE); and
- Make effective use of workforce-related data available to it to offer insight and advice which informs and supports workforce planning by both local and central government.

We intend to establish an executive agency which will formally be part of the Department of Education for accounting and accountability purposes. However, it will be jointly overseen and supported by both the Department of Health and the Department for Education with governance arrangements to reflect this. We anticipate the new body will be fully operational in 2018.

We know this closer relationship to Government may cause some debate. Government intends that collaboration, consultation and engagement with the social work sector will be a key feature of both the development and running of the new regulatory framework. The indicative regulations and policy statement make clear commitments here, including ensuring that standards will be developed in partnership with the sector and only agreed or changed after proper consultation.

In addition, the agency's operations will be governed by detailed, binding, regulations and its published framework documents. While the agency will set standards on behalf of the Secretaries of State, decisions about the quality of individual social work training programmes and the fitness to practise of individual social workers will be managed at arm's length from Ministers. We are committing to reviewing the agency's operations after three years, and considering then whether it can be moved onto a more independent footing. Taken together we believe this will deliver a transparent, fair, stable and effective regulatory framework.

Government remains committed to the maintenance of a unified profession and both Departments will continue to share policy responsibility for social work. We encourage you to read the policy statement and indicative regulations and our officials would be happy to discuss them in more detail with you.

I look forward to engaging with you further on these issues.

Yours sincerely,



Almudena Lara
Deputy Director- Social Work Reform (DfE)



Paul Richardson
Deputy Director – Social Care Quality & Workforce (DH)

Lancashire Children's Services Improvement Plan

Fostering & Adoption April 2016

Introduction

The experiences and progress of children looked after and achieving permanence, Ofsted 2015

‘Services for children in need of adoption are improving and they receive good-quality support post-adoption. Many still wait too long for permanence and do not receive timely help to understand their past experiences. There is a lack of strategic oversight of adoption. Previous targets, rather than the local authority’s analysis of current need, inform recruitment of both adopters and foster carers.’

Recommendation 12:

Ensure that the need for permanence for all looked after children is considered at an early stage and is regularly reviewed

- A tracking tool has been developed which will enable all permanence planning for children to be monitored. All cases known now to the adoption service are now tracked.
- The tracking tool incorporates revised timescales to prevent delay for children in securing early permanence. This will support improved performance against A1 & A2 on the Adoption scorecard.
- There are identified checks and monitoring identified on the tracking sheet
- An colour coordinated Early Permanence Adoption Timeline tool for social workers has been developed to ensure workers in each service know what to do at different points during the process. (timeline)
- Plans are in place to work with colleagues in CAFCASS and the Judiciary to identify blockage to early permanence and to consider concurrency and fostering for adoption to reduce the number of placement moves a child may have.

Recommendation 15

Ensure that managers of the service maintain a strategic overview of the experience of children from the point they enter care to adoption or permanency that is sufficiently rigorous to prevent drift and delay and assist with identifying and predicting future placement needs

- Children Awaiting Adoption service has now been integrated with the wider Adoption service, all functions are now managed by a single service.
- Work is taking place with Young People to consider how they influence service improvements.
- Service developments include;
 - Processes have been reviewed and new guidance implemented in relation to Lifestory Work and Later Life Letters
 - Timeliness of permanence planning has been reviewed and more streamlined services implemented
 - Tracking systems are now in place to monitor permanence plans
 - A comprehensive recruitment strategy has been drafted which targets sibling groups and older children harder to place
 - Step parent adoption process is under review and will be completed by end of May
 - Full review of current skill set in the service and development plan in place

Recommendation 16:

Ensure that all looked after children who need it receive timely life story work so they understand their history and what has happened in their lives.

- The backlog of all Lifestory Work and Later Life Letters for Adopted children has now been cleared
- A Lifestory Book protocol has been updated and implemented
- A system is in place to ensure managers quality assure all Lifestory Books and Later Life Letters
- Additional checks to progress are built into the panel process and reviews
- Process has been established to ensure Lifestory Books and Later Life Letters are now completed in real time. This has been shared and embedded in practice within Adoption team

Summary

The adoption service is committed to ensuring suitable adoptive families are identified without delay for all children for whom adoption is in their best interests. That recruitment and assessment arrangements are aligned with national systems and enable potential adopters to consider and to be considered for a wide range of children for whom they may provide a home. Children are able to develop safe and secure relationships with their adoptive family that persist over time. When support is needed, children, young people, families and carers are able to access it for as long as it is needed, throughout their childhood and beyond

Introduction

This report summarises the work of Lancashire's Fostering Panel from 1st October 2015 to 31st March 2016.

Composition of panels

We currently have 14 panel members who, between them, sit on two fostering panels a month. We have:

- 1 Independent chair
- 1 Panel Advisor
- 1 County Councillor
- 8 Independents – including 3 from the health sector
- 3 social workers

During this 6 month period we have recruited additional social workers and independent members.

Involving young people

We have also made considerable efforts to recruit young people to be panel members during this period. This is yet to come to fruition although progress is being made.

We have successfully engaged the young people involved in an advocacy group called LINX (run by Barnardos) who have taken the lead in our joint fostering and adoption development day in the last 6 months and this proved very beneficial to the panel members who attended. In addition, they have produced a list of questions that they consider important to ask potential carers. The panel chair now includes one question from the LINX group for all new approvals.

Support and training available to panel members

During this period, panel members had access to the following:

- A development day
- Training for new panel members from an outside agency
- Briefings each and every month which are stored on the server
- An appraisal
- A buddy as required
- Supervision/support from the panel chair and/or the panel advisor on any particular issues raised.

Panel Functions

The key functions of the fostering panel as determined by Regulation 25 are:

- To consider the suitability of prospective foster carers

- To recommend any terms of approval
- To consider the first review of foster carers and any other review as requested by the service
- To advise on the procedure for reviews and periodically to monitor their effectiveness
- To oversee the quality of reports submitted to panel
- To give advice and recommendations on any other matters referred to it

In addition to the above, the fostering panel considers resignations that occur within the first year of approval as a 'lessons learnt' exercise.

Fostering Panel Statistics 1st October 2015 – 31st March 2016

	1st Oct 2015 – 31st March 2016	1st April 2015 – 30th September 2015
<u>Types of Items</u>	<u>Number of Items</u>	<u>Number of Items</u>
Full Approvals	9	10
Connected Persons	3	6
Concurrent Approvals	1	4
Reassessments	0	4
First Reviews	23	20
Change of Approval	0	2
Review following Allegations	3	4
Agency Exemption	4	3
LCC Exemption	4	3
Regulation 25	2	2
Appeal	0	1
Resignation within 1 st Year	1	0
<u>Total</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>59</u>

Further detail in regard to the above

- There was 1 item out of the 50 where the ADM did not agree with the panel recommendation.
- No items have been deferred.
- 11 out of 11 panels had the ADM within 7 working days.
- 44 out of 50 foster carers were told in writing within 5 working days of the ADM.
- 6 out of 50 foster carers were told in writing within 7 working days of the ADM.
- 9 out of 50 were verbally told of the ADM decision within 2 working days
- In 41 cases out of the 50, the verbal confirmation of an ADM decision cannot be confirmed as no case note was recorded.
- 2 out of 50 were agency social workers, and therefore cannot confirm if they were verbally told of the ADM decision within 2 working days.

Analysis of the above

1. There has been a decrease in the number of new approvals in comparison to the last period. The total number for the assessment of mainstream, connected and concurrent carers has dropped from 20 to 13. That equates to a drop of **35%**.
2. In the majority of cases, it has been impossible to conclude if verbal feedback regarding an agency decision has been given within regulatory timescales with a total of **82%** being undetermined.
3. There are no other significant comparisons to draw from the above data.

Quality of reports

Of the 13 assessment reports submitted to panel during this period all 13 received comprehensive feedback regarding their quality from the panel. This feedback is an electronic system and the results are passed to the social worker and their manager. Reviews and other items do not receive this feedback.

The grading system in use goes from 1 to 5, with 5 being excellent, 4 Very good, 3 Good, 2 Satisfactory and 1 Poor. The feedback is broken down and covers various aspects of the report and the oral presentation of the social workers who attend, however for ease, this report gives the details of the quality of written reports overall.

- Of the 13 reports submitted, 6 were considered to be of excellent quality by the panel; that's **46%**.
- Of the 13 reports submitted, 5 were deemed to be very good; that's **38%**.
- Of the 13 reports submitted, 1 was deemed to be good.
- Of the 13 reports, 1 was deemed to be only satisfactory.
- There were no reports considered to be poor.

The reasons given by panel for the assessment judged to be only satisfactory was that the paperwork was confusing, not written logically and therefore difficult to follow.

The general reasons given by panel for assessments being judged to be excellent was that they consisted of accurate information, robust analysis and were clear and easy to read.

Analysis of the above

1. Of the 13 reports submitted **92%** were considered to be at least of good quality and above. There is therefore a generally high standard of assessment submissions to the fostering panel.

2. Assessments are generally considered to be excellent when the information is accurate and well analysed and the writing style clear and easy to read.
3. There has been a **35%** drop in the number of assessments (mainstream, connected and concurrent) coming to panel compared to the last 6 month period.

Conclusion

1. There is a significant drop in the number of new prospective foster carers being assessed and brought to panel.
2. Social workers in the Recruitment and Assessment team who prepare the assessment reports, are on the whole producing excellent assessments. It may be useful to feedback the general pointers that panel consider make an excellent assessment, which are:
 - Accurate information
 - Robust analysis
 - Clear and easy to read writing style

During this 6 month period there has not been a consistent panel chair and therefore this report has been completed by the panel advisor.



T Kelly 7/6/16

ADOPTION PANEL REPORT 1ST OCTOBER 2015 – 31ST MARCH 2016

Introduction

This report summarizes the work of Lancashire County Council's Adoption Panel over the 6 month period from 1st October 2015 – 31st March 2016. It is intended to complement the 6 monthly adoption agency reports provided to the council's executive under National Minimum Standard 25.

With regard to children's cases and the decision to place for adoption, this was removed from the panels remit, except in cases where there is no court scrutiny. However, this report also summarizes the work of these separate SHOPA panels (see section 2 of this report).

SECTION ONE

1. Composition of the adoption panels

The Agency is required to maintain a central list of persons who are considered to be suitable members of an adoption panel. This is essentially a pool of people with different skills, backgrounds.

The central list is designed to reduce delay through postponement of panels due to not being quorate, (requires a minimum of five members). One of the panel member requires a minimum of three years' experience as a social worker. During this period we have recruited additional independent and social work members from a range of personal and professional backgrounds in order to ensure diversity on our panels.

Each panel also requires an independent chair (or vice chair) and three other members, at least one of whom must be independent if the Chair is not present. During this period we have also recruited a second vice chair who is independent, our first vice chair being a manager within children's services. We also have 3 medical advisors who are available to sit on panel, access to a legal advisor as required, a panel advisor and a minute taker both of whom are also present for each panel. Currently, there are 3 Adoption panels held each month as a minimum.

2. Support and training available to panel members

During this period, panel members had access to: a development day, training for new panel members from an outside agency, briefings each and every month which are stored on the server, an appraisal, a buddy as required and supervision/support from the panel chair and/or the panel advisor on any particular issues raised.

3. Panel Functions

The Adoption Panels key function is to make recommendations to the agency decision maker on the following:

- The suitability of prospective adoptive applicants to adopt
- Whether a child should be placed for adoption with particular prospective adopters.
- To consider the review of approved adopters who have not been linked to a child in the first 12 months of approval
- To scrutinize cases where children are relinquished for adoption

The panels also look at any disrupted placements as a lessons learned exercise.

In addition, the National Minimum Standards 2014 states that:

- Panel's report every 6 months on the quality of reports presented
- Panel's report on the restrictions on preparing these reports

- Panel's report on the consistency of linking's, approvals and decisions to place for adoption (in the case of the later, as already noted this is reported on in section 2 of this report)

4. Composition of items presented to panel during this period

Number of assessment reports (PARs)	Number of linking reports (APRs)	Disruptions	Relinquished babies
35	27	3	1

The total number of items presented to the adoption panel during this period was **66**.

53% of all panel items presented were adoption assessments (PARs)

40% of all panel items presented were linking's (APRs)

5 The quality of reports presented to panel

The panels grade the paperwork for each item that is presented using an electronic feedback system. Of the 66 reports presented to panel during this period, 41 received this comprehensive feedback. That's **62%** of all items submitted. The lack of this feedback for the remaining **38%** of reports was due to technical difficulties. Please note that disruptions are not included in the grading system.

The grading system in use goes from 1 to 5, with 5 being excellent, 4 Very good, 3 Good, 2 Satisfactory and 1 Poor. The feedback is broken down and covers various aspects of the report and the oral presentation of the social workers who attend, however for ease, this report gives the details of the quality of written reports overall.

Reports where overall quality was excellent (5)	Reports where overall quality was very good (4)	Reports where overall quality was good (3)	Reports where overall quality was satisfactory (2)	Reports where overall quality was poor (1)
15	11	11	4	0

FURTHER BREAKDOWN OF THE ABOVE

- **36%** of the 41 reports that received feedback where graded as excellent
- Of the **36%** considered excellent, **54%** were assessments of prospective adopters and **46%** were linking's.
- Overall, **65%** of the 41 reports that received feedback were graded as above average (graded as above a 3)
- **26%** of the 41 reports that received feedback were graded as good
- Of the **26%** considered good or average, **54%** were assessments of prospective adopters and **46%** were linking's.
- **10%** of the 41 reports that received feedback were considered satisfactory.
- Of the **10%** considered satisfactory, **25%** were assessments of prospective adopters and **75%** were linking's.
- There were no reports deemed to be poor.

Of the reports considered to be only satisfactory, the reasons given for the low marks are a lack of analysis for the PARs, and a lack of robust matching evidence and generic support plans for the linking's.

ANALYSIS

Overall there is a consistently high standard of assessments and linking paperwork presented to panel, with **90%** of the 41 reports that received feedback gaining an overall score of good or above.

There is a consistently slightly higher proportion of assessments (PARs) that receive better grades than the linking paperwork (APRs), though this amounts to a marginal difference of only **8%**.

However, of the **10%** that required improvement, the majority were linking items and the issues that need feeding back to the service are:

- A need for proper analysis in all PARs
- A need for more robust matching evidence in the linking paperwork
- A need for more specific support plans tailored to the individual child within linking paperwork

All assessments and linking paperwork comes from a team that is centrally based, there is therefore no analysis of consistency across the different areas of Lancashire within these figures.

6. Timescales

Of the 35 adoption reports submitted to panel during this period, the overall timescales from Registration of interest to receiving a recommendation at panel were over 6 months in 14 cases, that's **40%** of assessments received at panel that were out of the overall 6 month timescale (this is prior to receiving an ADM).

Of the 27 linking's submitted to panel during this period, the number that did not obtain a match within 6 months of a decision to place for adoption were 14 cases, that's **51%** of all linking's brought to panel.

While 2 of the PARs were out of timescale due to being deferred and 1 was due to a negative conclusion being evidenced by the worker, in the majority of cases the reasons given are varied and include: delays in stage 1 due to statutory checks not being received, a change of circumstances for the prospective adopters, and the need to take more time due to complex issues.

Where linking's were out of timescale, many of the reasons were due to a change of plan (to split siblings) or due to the complex matching needs of the child.

ANALYSIS

While the reasons given for submissions being out of timescale are varied, given the high number of items (**40%** of PARs and **51%** of linking's) there is clearly a need for the service to look into this further and to take steps to reduce delay wherever possible.

7. Qualified Social workers

Panels are required to feedback on whether the social worker preparing the reports was suitably qualified under the restrictions on writing reports 2005 regulations. **100%** of cases presented were by a suitably qualified social worker. In the cases where a social worker was not suitably qualified, the work was overseen by a relevant qualified social worker/manager.

On occasions where a worker has little experience of attending or presenting at panel, team managers attended in a supportive role.

SECTION TWO

1. The composition of 'should be placed for adoption' panels

The decision to place for adoption is now considered by a separate panel which consists of an agency decision maker, a panel advisor, the social worker presenting the case and their manager.

2. The breakdown of business and grading of submissions

During this period, 28 cases were brought to SHOPA (should be placed for adoption) meetings. Of these, 9 were changes of plan leaving a total of 19 cases for a decision to place for adoption, however of these 19, 1 case was heard twice as it had to be deferred for a month due to the information presented being insufficient for the ADM to make a decision. That gives a figure of 18 cases. Where siblings are being considered for a decision to place for adoption and the paperwork is submitted together, this has been counted as 1 case.

The 18 SHOPA cases amounts to 24 children having received a decision that they should be placed for adoption.

The Agency decision maker has considered the quality and consistency of child permanence reports (CPRs) across the different areas of Lancashire, as seen below.

	Number of SHOPA cases from the East of the county	Number of SHOPA cases from the North of the county.	Number of SHOPA cases from the Central area of the county
	10	4	4
Number considered good	4	2	2
Number considered to require improvement	4	2	2
Number considered inadequate	2	0	0

FURTHER BREAKDOWN OF THE ABOVE

- **55%** of all SHOPA cases brought were from the East of the County
- **44%** of all SHOPA paperwork presented was considered to be of good quality
- However, that leaves **56%** of all SHOPA paperwork presented that was considered to require improvement or be inadequate.
- The East of the county has the highest number of cases presented that are considered to be less than good, **33%** of the total.

ANALYSIS

There is a considerably higher number of SHOPA cases presented from the East of the county, with **55%** of all cases being from this area. The East also has the highest number of cases considered to be less than good, with **33%** of their submissions requiring improvement or being deemed

inadequate. However, there is a need for improvement across all areas as **56%** of all paperwork received was considered to be less than good.

The reasons this paperwork was judged to be less than good are:

- Submission sheets not properly completed with regulatory information
- Medical information not analyzed
- Life story plans not robust
- The guardians views not always clear
- Many CPRs just don't tell the story of the child's life and thoroughly analyze the information. This was the biggest concern raised from the agency decision maker.

3. Timescales of submissions for 'should be placed for adoption' decisions

There were no specific issues raised regarding the timescale of submissions for should be placed for adoption decisions, with the majority of submissions meeting the required deadline of 6 weeks between the plan having been ratified by the Independent reviewing officer and the decision date.

A total of **66%** of submissions for should be placed for adoption decisions were within the above timescale.

The reasons cited for the **34%** that were not within this 6 week timescale were:

- The court requesting further assessments that were concluded as negative and the plan of adoption was then pursued
- Delay in receiving adoption medicals
- Further viability assessments having to be conducted

Where there is a change of plan from adoption, very often these cases are not brought back to the agency decision maker within a reasonable timeframe. As an example, 3 of the 9 changes of care plan submitted had not been returned to ADM within a year of the independent reviewing officer ratifying the change of care plan. That's a figure of **33%**.

There is clearly a need to ensure measures are put in place for the timely return to panel of any cases where there is a change of plan.

4. Qualified Social workers

The agency decision maker for should be placed for adoption decisions is required to feedback on whether the social worker preparing the reports was suitably qualified. There has been one submission during this period where the social worker didn't have the required post qualifying experience and where there was no indication that the report had been overseen by a suitably experienced social worker, this item was considered inadequate and was deferred by the agency decision maker. The item is yet to return to panel. Therefore **100%** of cases that received a decision during this period were either submitted by a suitably qualified social worker or were overseen by a relevant qualified social worker/manager.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the above collated data there are a number of issues that require consideration:

1. A need for proper analysis in all PARs submitted to panel in order to achieve a minimum of a 'good' assessment rating
2. A need for more robust matching evidence in the linking paperwork to prevent submissions being considered less than good.
3. A need for more specific support plans tailored to the individual child within linking paperwork to prevent submissions being deemed less than good.

4. For measures to be put in place to address the significant delay that appears to be occurring with the submissions of prospective adopters (PARs)
5. For measures to be put in place to address the significant delay that appears to be occurring with submissions to link children to suitable adopters.
6. To consider the reasons for the significantly higher submission rate for decisions to place for adoption from the East of the county.
7. To take actions to improve the relatively low standard of child permanence reports (CPRs) submitted for a decision to place for adoption.

SUPPLEMENTAL

In addition to all of the above required data, during this period from 1st Oct 2015 – 31st Mar 2016, the adoption panel has gathered feedback on its own performance from social workers and adopters attending panel. While this is not regulatory, it demonstrates a commitment to by the panel to develop the service they offer.

The findings have been attached as appendices with appendix one being the feedback from social workers and appendix two from adopters. These appendices will be shared with the panel members along with this completed report.

During this 6 month period there has not been a consistent panel chair and therefore this report has been completed by the panel advisor.



T Kelly 22/5/16

ACTION PLAN IN RESPONSE TO THE ABOVE :

- To address the quality of the support plans, the team has been trained on expectations on the quality of these reports, with a further development session planned and carried out On 25/5/16 on the linking documents, support plans and analysis. Guidance notes have also been re-issued.
- To address the delay in timescales, the team manager is now informed of any timescales that are potentially going to be outside of the regulatory timescales, who then scrutinises the reasons and develops systems to prevent where possible similar situations going forward. There is also much closer communication about delay between the Agency Adviser and the team manager which further enhances this scrutiny.
- The delay in timescales of matching children and progressing their care plans to permanence, are now more closely monitored via a spreadsheet shared between Children Social Care and the Children Awaiting Adoption team. There is also a monthly tracking meeting which tracks all cases of children with a care plan of adoption, in order to progress and minimises delay wherever possible.
- There are 12 new advance practitioner posts recently created within Lancashire, part of their role will be to mentor and support child care social workers when they are writing the child permanence reports (CPRs) in order to improve the overall quality of these reports.
- New guidance documents and quality assurance templates have been devised recently to assist child care social workers to complete CPRs in order to improve overall quality.

- A more robust grading and feedback system is now in place to give clearer feedback to child care social workers who present to the agency decision maker for a decision to place a child for adoption.
- A program of training and workshops has been devised and rolled out that should see an improvement in the quality of child permanence reports presented and this should be reflected in the next panel report.

TIMESCALES AND MONITORING OF THE ACTION PLAN

1. The monitoring for the above will be on-going but will be evidenced by the next panel report. The timescale for the completion of the next 6 monthly panel report is estimated as the end of October 2016.
2. There has not been a timescale applied to the action plan for implementing each measure as they are all already in place.

Action plan dated 9/6/16

