

Lancashire County Council

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 22nd May, 2018 at 2.00 pm in Cabinet Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Andrea Kay (Chair)

County Councillors

N Hennessy	D Howarth
I Brown	H Khan
J Cooney	J Rear
B Dawson	D T Smith
A Gardiner	M Tomlinson

Co-opted members

Councillor Stella Brunskill, Children's Partnership Board - Hyndburn, Ribble Valley, Rossendale

County Councillor Bernard Dawson replaced County Councillor Loraine Cox for this meeting.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes from the meeting held on 11 April 2018

Resolved: That the minutes from the meeting held on the 11 April 2018 be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. Report on Domestic Abuse relating to Children and Young People

The Chair welcomed Sally Allen, Interim Deputy Director of Children's Services; Tracy Poole-Nandy, Head of Service, Children's Social Care – Central; Rose Howley – County Manager MASH; Lesley Morville – Locality Manager, Children and Family Wellbeing Service; D.I. Allen Davies – Lancashire Constabulary; Debbie Thompson – Public Health Specialist – Safe and Healthy Travel and Partnerships; and County Councillor Phillippa Williamson, Lead Member for Young People to the meeting.

The report presented provided an overview of the impact and prevalence of domestic abuse on children and families and the role of the county council and partner agencies in providing support and safeguarding children.

The committee was informed that the police were committed to embarking on a review of all domestic abuse processes and were moving towards focusing on the prevention and reduction of domestic abuse. It was confirmed that a review of their whole approach was being undertaken to ensure processes were efficient. And in the longer term, it was reported that there would be a full, comprehensive review of every aspect of domestic abuse.

An update was then provided to members on the Domestic Abuse Cabinet Working Group. It was highlighted that the group have identified a need for a holistic view of how the work was being delivered across the services and in particular from the perspective of preventing, protecting and promoting recovery from domestic abuse using a case study approach. It was anticipated that a report would be taken to Cabinet in autumn 2018.

Members were informed that workforce development was a priority and to have the skills in place to identify domestic abuse. The needs of the child had to be looked at holistically. Workforce development was also being looked at across the Multi Agency Partnership.

The committee requested that consideration should be given for signposting in every high school in Lancashire for children affected by domestic abuse, containing points of contact for them to get the right support.

Resolved: That;

- i. The report be noted.
- ii. Signposting be included in high schools in accessible areas for young people with details where they can contact the right services – to be identified through the task group and service.
- iii. Further consideration be given to the use of media to raise awareness (through the Domestic Abuse Board and the police).
- iv. A Bite Size Briefing be organised for members on the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme.

5. Lancashire's Response to the National Troubled Families Programme

The Chair welcomed Debbie Duffell, Head of Children and Families, and, Dr Sakthi Karunanithi, Director for Public Health and Wellbeing to the meeting.

The report presented outlined the details of progress achieved to date with the national programme and identified the challenges still to be addressed in the final two years of programme activity to enable vulnerable residents in Lancashire to

fully benefit from the programme's requirements and for the council to achieve its projected financials linked to significant and sustained progress.

Members were informed that because the Children and Family Wellbeing Service was not a statutory service there were families who disengaged from the programme. However, it was highlighted that the key element was to make sure the children, young people and families were safe and the risk elements were considered, and assessment systems were in place to support this.

In terms of the high number of vacancies in front line staffing, members were advised that this was particularly challenging in terms of the service's capacity to be able to respond at the early help level. However the service was confident that these vacancies would be filled over the next few weeks. In addition, the service was working closely with colleagues in Children's Social Care to make sure the families that were being worked with had the right level of help at the right time.

Resolved: That;

- i. The report be noted.
- ii. A briefing note be provided to members on data systems and recruitment updates.

6. Lancashire Children's Services Self-Assessment

The Chair welcomed Sally Allen, Interim Deputy Director of Children's Services; and Barbara Bath, Head of Service Adoption, Fostering and Residential YOT, to the table.

The report presented provided a summary of the overarching findings of Lancashire's Children's Services self-assessment, prepared for the forthcoming Ofsted inspection.

The inspection had taken place in September 2015 and the findings and report had been published in November 2015. Since then it had been a two and a half year improvement journey. There had been an investment to strengthen capacity within children's services. Children's Services had worked closely with Ofsted and there had been quarterly monitoring visits from Ofsted. The Improvement Board had scrutinised the progress of Children's Services. The Children's Services Scrutiny Committee had also played an important role in terms of scrutiny and challenge. The service felt it had made significant progress but acknowledged that further work was required.

It was noted that Lancashire had a considerable amount of independent provision in terms of fostering and residential establishments. It was highlighted to members that careful consideration was given by the service where children looked after were placed outside of Lancashire. Members requested that Children's Services look at how the number of children looked after placed outside of Lancashire could be reduced.

Resolved: That;

- i. The report be noted.
- ii. A briefing note be provided to members on the breakdown on Children Looked After outside of Lancashire.

7. Work Plan 2017/18

The work plan for the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee for the 2017/18 municipal year was presented. The topics included were identified at the work planning workshop held on 21 June 2017.

A request for an item on Contact be added to the Work Plan. Members were informed of a work planning session for both Children's Services Scrutiny Committee and Education Scrutiny Committee on 26th June.

Resolved: The report presented be noted.

8. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

9. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee will take place on Wednesday 4 July at 2:00pm in Cabinet Room C (The Duke of Lancaster Room) at the County Hall, Preston.

L Sales
Director of Corporate Services

County Hall
Preston