

Lancashire Children's Services Improvement Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 7th November, 2017 at 2.30 pm in Committee Room 'B' - The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Geoff Driver CBE	Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Mrs Susie Charles	Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Phillippa Williamson	Lancashire County Council
Alison Aylott	Primary Schools
Jane Booth	Lancashire Safeguarding Children's Board
Louise Taylor	Lancashire County Council
Tony Crane (Chair)	Independent Chair
Chris Coyle	Lancashire County Council
Natasha Wright	Lancashire County Council
Bridgett Welch	Lancashire Care Foundation Trust
Amanda Hatton	Lancashire County Council
Debbie Duffell	Lancashire County Council
Simon Fisher	Lancashire County Council
Josephine Lee	Lancashire County Council
Vicky Gent	Lancashire County Council
Debbie Duffell	Lancashire County Council
Sam Gorton (Clerk)	Lancashire County Council

Apologies:

Paul Wilcox	Voluntary Community Faith Sector
Stephen Cox	Secondary Schools
Jo Turton	Lancashire County Council
Ian Whitehead	Lancashire Constabulary

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair, Tony Crane, welcomed all to the meeting. Roundtable introductions were made. Apologies for absence were presented from Jo Turton, Paul Wilcox, Stephen Cox and DC Ian Whitehead.

It was noted that this meeting would be to reflect where the Board can be more effective for its' final six meetings and will look to have three or four specific areas to focus on.

2. Minutes and actions from the last meeting held on 10 October 2017

Resolved: The minutes of the last meeting held on 10 October 2017 were approved as an accurate record.

Matters Arising

With regard to Item 6 – DCS Progress and Update, it was reported that in North Lancashire there are specific challenges, however are more consistent across the piste.

3. Feedback from the Operational Improvement Group (and Purposeful Practice Board - PPB)

Chris Coyle gave the following update:

The Operational Improvement Group has now become the Purposeful Practice Board (PPB) and the last meeting was looking at what the aims and remit of the group and how practice moves forward and develops. Simon Fisher reported that work still needs to be done in ensuring there is equal representation on the Board from across Lancashire and also with partner agencies with regular attendance at meetings being key.

Services have been busy preparing for Ofsted and the Peer Review.

Front line staff appear to be judging themselves too harshly. Managers are containing this anxiety and are making it better. Moderation from managers – aspire to be better and manage it.

Staff are asking about pilot models that are being carried out in different areas and when they are going to be rolled out to across Lancashire.

Aspiration is right, however now building the foundation to get a "Good" rating.

Feedback again from Ofsted was on the meaningful information that should be recorded following the 36,000 visits that are carried out a year by Social Workers as an Authority. This is still not happening, even though in practice what is being done is right, however the recording does not mirror this.

With regards retention, the worry is still making the job attractive in the middle band as there are only so many opportunities and the worry is that good Social Workers will leave.

Caseloads feel like they are increasing and this needs to be monitored as well as complex caseloads that need to be spread out evenly across Social Workers.

4. Care Leavers Update - Sincerely You - Video

The Board were presented with the Sincerely You video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LD_bM_0TjtU&feature=youtu.be which has been developed as part of National Care Leavers week. This will also be shown at Full Council on 14 December 2017.

5. External Review - Feedback from Peer Review and Ofsted

External Review

Amanda Hatton informed the Board of feedback that had been received following the Review:

- Told us what we told them
- Enthusiastic staff who know their children well – busy but manageable
- Audit working well – signs of improvement again
- Compliant but quality fragile – a mixture was found across the piste
- Risk sensible embedding but need to be more balanced
- IRO footprint visible
- Stronger multi agency input to plans
- Need to show the working out – this is a downfall, and lots of work is going on around this – it needs to improve now
- Good participation – very strong again and met a different cohort of young people each time who have been very articulate and very engaging
- Data significantly improved – this has been down to Project Accuracy – good examples across the board
- Wellbeing, Prevention and Early Help links to be reviewed
- Better clarity about expectation – starting to move away around challenge

Ofsted

Amanda Hatton informed the Board of feedback from the recent monitoring visit:

- Enthusiastic staff and supportive teams
- Thresholds felt right
- Know the children well
- Assessment good bordering RI
- Good audit – making an impact on practice
- Managers accessible
- Need to show the workings out – a better job is being done than is being recorded, not doing ourselves justice by not showing it – it is also the Voice of the Child, a lived experience – stages of their journey
- Embed quality of practice
- Risk sensible needs sustainability factors
- Voice of the child clear – lived experience less so
- Next monitoring visit likely to be January 2018 – MASH

The last monitoring visit was the most positive in the last two years so really pleasing. We are moving in the right direction.

Input time for assessments should be immediate and succinct and this needs to be rolled out across the County.

Vicky Gent commented that staff are undertaking learning and development over the next six months to learn how to capture the child's life, so the file tells all about that child, ie relationships, attachment, siblings/family etc.

Narrative for the North needs to improve, they are not in the place they were two years ago, things are improving and need to draw on the positives to change the narrative.

Still needs to be more joined up working with schools and Children's Services especially around child protection. There has been a number of staffing changes across the different teams dealing with children and this needs to be communicated to schools on a regular basis. Vicky Gent stated that a letter had been issued to every school a few years ago with contact details on their, and agreed that this should be revisited, and possibly look at Practice Managers visiting their designated schools on a regular basis and start rebuilding those relationships with Heads and DSLs.

MASH contact to conversion is still low and there is still far too many referrals coming in the front door. A conversation needs to be had with the Police as to why they are coming in the front door when they could go to WPEH.

There also needs to be more conversations around MASH, Children's Social Care, Education and the Safeguarding Board – needs to be more strategic and sustainable.

The Wellbeing, Prevention and Early Help offer has been drafted and developed and the locality officers have made contact with schools.

So What Next

- Lots of work is being done on recording.
- MOMO (Mind of my Own) which is funded through the LSCB is working well and Lancashire had the most MOMO documents nationally for October.
- Manager Academy is mirror the Social Workers Academy.
- Keep doing what we are doing.
- Make job opportunities more attractive than agencies – in terms of conversion from Agency to LCC, more than 50% agency have stayed.
- Very few Agency managers now.
- Second Social Work Academy took place on 6 November 2017.
- Audit is working well and findings are better for August than July.

Actions:

- MASH locality developments to include schools – Simon Fisher and Alison Aylott
- LSCB initiative to focus on schools and safeguarding – Jane Booth and Alison Aylott
- Communique to schools, including key personnel contact details, invite for visits/get-togethers with school and social workers, any other bright ideas also – Amanda Hatton/Brendan Lee
- Early Help focus on de-escalation working closely with school colleagues – Debbie Duffell and Alison Aylott

6. Quality of Practice and Performance

Amanda Hatton reported on the quality and performance:

- Assessment timescales have seen an improvement for October.
- Numbers of children going into residential care is rising, especially Under 10s – this needs to be monitored.
- Private fostering visits are being carried out and records being done.
- Care Leavers active contact is 96%. Work needs to be done around NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).
- Performance session dedicated the third week in November with all senior staff on assessments.

7. Early Help and Children in Need (CIN)

Amanda Hatton gave an update in the following:

- Complex CIN allocated to Social Workers (45%)
- All cases have Social Worker oversight and assessments
- Outcomes good
- There are still too many
- There is half the number than 12 months ago
- However, these cannot be stepped down to 2As

The options are:

- More social workers, would need 40 more.
- Higher thresholds and a tighter front door
- Revised WPEH offer – open cases offer preventing rather than removals. Where could cases be stepped down to if not a 2? Debbie Duffell reported that she is currently working on a model for Social Worker oversight in the WPEH service.
- A narrative has been developed for complex families.
- Work with families longer than 12 weeks.
- Still carrying a staffing vacancy and convert this to have more capacity at Social Worker level (possibly a Newly Qualified Social Worker) and manage families stepping down. This proposal needs to go to Management Team for approval.

8. Any Other Business

Future Meetings

Action:

- As discussed at the meeting, please email Tony Crane by the 10 November 2017 with your view as a Board member the areas it should focus on to have the most impact in what is expected to be the last five or six times it will meet – All Board Members

Lancashire Children's Safeguarding Board (LSCB)

The Annual Reports can be viewed [here](#).

PROUD Nominations

The nominations for the Children Looked After and Care Leavers celebration event are now open. Further information can be found [here](#).

9. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 5 December 2017 at 2.30pm in Committee Room 'B' – Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston.