

## **Lancashire Children's Services Improvement Board**

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**Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 5th December, 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
Alison Aylott	Primary Schools
Paul Wilcox	Voluntary Community Faith Sector
Stephen Cox	Secondary Schools
Tony Crane	Independent Chair
Chris Coyle	Lancashire County Council
Natasha Wright	Lancashire County Council
Bridgett Welch	Lancashire Care Foundation Trust
Amanda Hatton	Lancashire County Council
Ian Whitehead	Lancashire Constabulary
Simon Fisher	Lancashire County Council
Louise Burton	NHS Safeguarding
Stephen Belbin	Lancashire County Council
Victoria Gibson	Lancashire County Council
Andy Milroy	LCC - Clerk
Josephine Lee	Lancashire County Council
Rose Howley	Lancashire County Council
Dan Onions	Lancashire Constabulary
Nicola Murphy	Lancashire County Council

### **Apologies:**

Linda Clegg	Lancashire County Council
Louise Taylor	Lancashire County Council
Jo Turton	Lancashire County Council
Debbie Duffell	Lancashire County Council

### **110. Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair, Tony Crane, welcomed all to the meeting. Roundtable introductions were made. Apologies for absence were presnted from Jo Turton, Louise Taylor, Amanda Barbour and Moya McKinney.

### **111. Minutes and actions from the last meeting**

**Resolved:** The minutes of the last meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2017 were approved as an accurate record.

### **Matters Arising**

With regard to item 5 – External Review – Feedback from Peer Review and Ofsted it was reported under communique to schools, including key personnel contact details and invites for visits / get togethers that Brendan Lee has written a letter to schools.

In addition, with regard to Early Help focus in Children's Social Care it was noted that a secondment had been secured of a Head in the North who starts on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2018 for at least two terms.

## **112. Purposeful Practice Board**

Chris Coyle, Children's Social Care Senior Manager, Lancashire County Council gave the following update:

An email has been sent out to staff / stakeholders to gather items for the Purposeful Practice Board (PPB) to focus on over the coming months.

At the last PPB meeting an action plan was created to based on feedback provided at a session held on 17<sup>th</sup> November.

Case work models continue to be monitored with emphasis on focusing on front line services.

North and Central remain consistent and the general view in the East is that it feels ok and colleagues are working in smarter ways. A development day was held last week which has received positive feedback. There are steps being taken to move from compliance focus.

Overall it was felt that moral is good across the Social Work team.

**Resolved:** That the update from the Purposeful Practice Board be noted.

## **113. DCS Progress and update**

Amanda Hatton, Director of Children's Services, gave a presentation to the Board which contained DCS progress and a further update.

Amanda gave an update on the Improvement Plan for the period August to October 2017, with the following milestones achieved:

- MASH plan in place and driving improvement.
- CIN pathway has been agreed and re-aligned.
- Practice Manager / Team Manager role has been clarified and expectations document developed.
- CIOC has been re-aligned.
- Audit has been embedded and is making a difference to practice.
- The Peer Review has taken place.
- The Sufficiency Strategy is in place.
- ART Team has been expanded.
- CSE – a new model is in place in Central Lancashire.

- Social Work Academy is in Place – 2 cohorts have been delivered.
- There is a new Head of Service in the North.

Amanda reported on areas to focus on until the end of January, including:

- Early help – governance and better links with schools.
- MASH development – there is a review on 5<sup>th</sup> December.
- LADO role
- Implications of the new Act especially Local Offer for Care Leavers.
- Residential Strategy – deliver the provision – staff in place but property delays.
- Build on CSE work to ensure CSE and County Lines are considered and embedded in practice.
- Managers owning and embedding improvement.
- Workforce focus.

With regard to October Audit Findings it was reported that, since February 2017 the statistics have changed from 21% Inadequate to 9% Inadequate, 76% Requires Improvement to 70% Requires Improvement and 3% Good to 21% Good so the findings show that overall progress is being made.

An update was also provided on Moderation and External Findings. The County Council's own audit scores are now aligned with Ofsted's more closely and are consistently providing the same scores, out of 9 audits reviewed only 1 was felt to be the wrong grade.

In addition, with regard to future challenges it was reported that an assessment would take place (in 45 days). Child Protection (CP) and Children Looked After (CLA) rates remain a challenge along with supervision and workforce.

With regard to Workforce it was noted that agency staff remained above target but had reduced and was moving in the right direction.

The number of active agency social workers had further reduced from 38 to 30. At management level, the number of management agency staff in post at the end of the quarter further reduced by 3 across the County.

**Action Point:** With regard to the Improvement Plan, it was agreed by the Board that a projection of what to expect in future months be added to the Plan.

In addition a Young Person, Iqra, was participating in a "takeover" day shadowing Amanda Hatton in her role as Director of Children's Services.

Iqra gave a presentation on the vision for Young People to have a second family and a second chance. In addition the presentation raised awareness of the priorities for Young People living in care, including being aware of what Education support is available to them, a Guide to being in care in Lancashire – so that Young People can know their rights and what is available. Iqra also advised the Board that a key issue for Young People is for them to be allowed to be normal and live their life as any teenager or young person would.

**Resolved:** The Board noted and commented on the DCS Progress and update, and, noted the presentation and feedback on the experiences of Young People by Iqra.

#### **114. MASH**

Simon Fisher, Social Work Consultant, Lancashire County Council presented a report (circulated) regarding the Multi-Agency Safeguarding HUB (MASH).

It was highlighted that the report captured performance information in relation to MASH for the 3-month period 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017. It was noted that whilst total Contacts, Referrals and Conversions were at a high level, they were showing a downward trend and the total numbers had reduced from July 2017 to September 2017.

It was noted that further work on the conversion rate was required, the Board discussed if the conversion rate suggested professionals do not fully understand the CoN thresholds.

The Board agreed that the development of the integrated early help teams should impact on the conversion rate and that this should be monitored closely to assess the impact over the next period. It was acknowledged that it will not be possible to influence the type and quality of contacts received from agencies such as the NSPCC and North West Ambulance Service (NWAS).

It was reported that the monthly average for cases progressing to Referral in 2016/17 was 880, whereas for the first 6 months this year it is 780. Therefore, there is an increase in contact activity compared to last year but fewer cases are progressing to Referral.

The percentage of Referrals that receive an assessment should be high and is an indicator of the quality of threshold decision making within MASH. It was reported that the percentages contained within the report represent good performance although there was a slight fall since July and the emergence of a downward trend, which needs to be monitored.

Re-referral rates should be a lower percentage to indicate good performance, the report presented showed a downward trend and a reduction in re-referrals from August to September 2017.

Assessments that led to NFA initially showed a reduction (which indicates good performance) but this has increased again in September 2017, it was noted that further analysis of this increase would be undertaken to understand why this has occurred.

CAF / Early Help Data does not translate into CAF activity so additional performance work has been done to break down the main referrers to identify any areas of concern or patterns.

With regard to telephone call date for all three locality MASH teams, it can be seen that the North is taking a similar volume of calls to East and Central when considering direct calls and calls via CAS. This is despite East and Central being the busier areas. This perhaps reflects that the North team was established back in May as a Pilot team and so has had longer to build relationships with professionals who call directly. The date for

October shows a similar trend in East and Central, with an increase in the number of direct calls.

Police personnel are co-located in each of the three MASH locality teams. New ways of working following the Police Review of how PVP's are managed were piloted in the north team from May 2017, working in conjunction with new methods applied by Children's Social Care and other partners in the North.

This is having a positive impact on the time taken to process police referrals and also resulted in the upskilling of Police staff who now have regular professional discussions with partners from a variety of agencies.

Currently there is a queue of PVP's but this has come down considerably since the new ways of working were rolled out to Central and East. In mid-September there were over 800 Police referrals in the queue and currently the queue is 230 involving a child.

With regard to Children's Social Care "End to End" times it was noted that this is the time taken from a Referral coming into MASH and a decision being made by the social work Practice Manager. Performance reporting on ICS relating to this indicator shows that at the end of September 2017, 88% of Referrals had a decision made within one working day. There is however an issue about how confident the service can be of this reporting as it has been identified that in some cases, the date of the decision defaults to the date of the referral so can give a misleading picture. Further work is being done to address this issue and it will be resolved prior to the Ofsted monitoring visit.

The Chair summarised this item as follows:

- Demand conversion rate is getting better.
- Robustness of decision making is good.
- Staff have a good grasp of what is coming in and are taking a risk sensible approach.
- Need to continue with the Plan and monitor closely.
- The integrated model is a positive element.
- There is clarity about what is in place as the service works towards step down.
- MASH colleagues were thanked for their hard work to continue improving the outcomes reported.

**Resolved:** The Board welcomed progress made with regard to MASH and noted the areas for improvement that will be monitored and worked on over the next period.

## **115. Any other business**

Amanda Hatton reported to the Board that she would not be available for a short period from 12<sup>th</sup> January 2018 onwards but that cover would be provided with all partners notified of the cover arrangement in due course.

Bridgett Welsh reported that CQC inspections were to take place in February 2018 and that preliminary work was being undertaken by inspectors who were visiting now and will

continue to visit after Christmas. A further update will be provided at a future Board meeting on the outcome of the CQC inspections.

**116. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next Board meeting will be held on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2018 at 1.15pm in Committee Room 'B', County Hall, Preston, PR1 8RJ.