

## **Lancashire County Council**

### **Children's Services Scrutiny Committee**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 4th July, 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	P V Greenall
I Brown	J Rear
A Cheetham	J Mein
J Cooney	D T Smith
B Dawson	M Tomlinson

#### **Co-opted members**

None in attendance

County Councillor Bernard Dawson replaced County Councillor Sobia Malik.

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received County Councillor Andrew Gardiner and Councillor Gail Goodman, Children's Partnership Board - Fylde, Wyre and Lancashire North.

#### **2. Constitution: Membership; Chair and Deputy Chair; and Terms of Reference**

The report presented set out the membership, Chair and Deputy Chair and terms of reference of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2018/19.

**Resolved:** That the following be noted;

- i. The appointment of County Councillors Andrea Kay and Nikki Hennessy as Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee for the remainder of the 2018/19 municipal year.
- ii. The new membership of the Committee following the county council's Annual Meeting on 24 May 2018; and
- iii. The terms of reference of the Committee.

#### **3. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

None were disclosed.

#### **4. Minutes from the meeting held on 22 May 2018**

**Resolved:** That the minutes from the meeting held on the 22 May 2018 be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

## **5. Contact - for Families with Disabled Children**

The Chair welcomed Catherine Ratcliffe, from Contact, to the meeting. The report presented provided a brief overview of Contact, a charity for families with disabled children which offered support, news and resources for parent carer forums.

The Committee was informed that the request was received by Contact in October 2017 to support the establishment of a new parent carer forum in Lancashire. Work commenced in November 2017 with the first meeting of 14 parents in Leyland with a further meeting held in December. Subsequent meetings were cancelled due to unforeseeable circumstances and inclement weather across the county. Members were advised that there was considerable work required due to the geographical size of Lancashire and a request was made to parents in Leyland and Ormskirk to work together in small groups to assist with the engagement of parents and carers across Lancashire around the proposed new forum.

It was reported that the challenge was about establishing a culture of change and a co-productive relationship. Building a relationship of trust between parents and the local authority was vital. Forums were independent and depended on the goodwill and commitment of parents.

It was noted that in Lancashire around 20% of parents were from minority groups and the question of how Contact engaged with these parents was raised. It was pointed out that part of the grant application was about hard to reach groups. In addition, it was acknowledged that it was difficult for some parents to travel and Contact had asked parents where their preferable meeting places would be.

Members were advised that it was important to build capacity from the outset. It was also important to reach the people who may be reluctant to come and have their voice heard. It was vital to make these people welcome. Further to this, it was reported that governance for the new forum had to be fit for purpose.

Members were concerned that the work needed to be undertaken in ensuring engagement from parents and carers across Lancashire required more one to one support from Contact but acknowledged the challenge that the geographical size of Lancashire presented for one person to complete.

From the information presented, the Committee felt that there was a need for additional capacity to be provided from Contact to further support work undertaken given:

- The geographical size of Lancashire and the challenges that presents in ensuring inclusivity and engagement for all parent/carers;

- The added complexity of the capacity and relationship issues from the previous forum; and
- The need to ensure better engagement and relationships within the forum and with Lancashire County Council

The Committee also felt that given the time taken so far in relation to the progress made, that an action plan was required with timescales to further support the commitment from Contact in supporting the development of a Lancashire Parent Carer Forum.

**Resolved:** That;

- i. The report presented be noted.
- ii. A letter be sent from the Chair of the Committee to the Regional Manager at Contact with a copy to the Department for Education highlighting the concerns raised on the progress in Lancashire on the establishment of a Lancashire Parent Carer Forum,
- iii. An action plan be drafted on delivery and timescales by Contact, and
- iv. A further update on progress from Contact be provided to the Committee later in the autumn.

## **6. SEND Partnership Team - Engagement**

The Chair welcomed David Graham, Head of Service for SEND; Sophie Valinakis, SEND Partnership Project Lead; Gareth Jenkins, SEND Communication Lead; and Sally Allen, Interim Deputy Director of Children's Services, to the meeting.

The report presented provided an overview of information to be presented to members on the progress of the Lancashire SEND Partnership engagement with parent / carers.

It was reported that the action plan set out the changes needed to address the recommendations that Ofsted and the CQC made in their report. Working together with children and families was essential to making the plan succeed.

An Engagement Working Group had been set up which had three task and finish groups:

- 1) Creating a coproduction strategy.
- 2) Engagement and POET (Personal Outcomes Evaluation Toolkit).
- 3) Improving the local offer accessibility and quality of information.

The group had established 'Your Child, Your Voice' engagement sessions for parents / carers of CYP and SEND.

Regarding POET, it was reported that this was an independent annual survey carried out by the national charity In-Control. It measured the experience of CYP with an EHCP and the experience of the families and practitioners who supported

them. It identified what was working well and what areas needed improvement. The LCC SEND team was the most successful than any other authority in terms of getting parents to complete the survey. The survey was available online and also paper copies were sent out to the parents. The survey was anonymous and there had been 800 replies from the 7000 forms sent out to parents.

The query of communication with parents was raised and what the way forward would be. It was confirmed that the best way forward was for parents to come to the sessions and giving feedback on their experiences and wishes. Regarding the coproduction strategy, members were advised that the team was looking at examples of best practice to support this moving forward.

A second phase of events was being set up for the autumn term and members were told that parents would be involved in these events.

The Committee was informed that there was only one parent on the SEND Partnership Board at the moment as a representation for the county. The Board had recognised that this was not enough and that at least three parents were needed. At these sessions, an expression of interest form had been set up to see if parents would be interested in joining the Board.

**Resolved:** That;

- i. The report presented be noted;
- ii. Members attend engagement events in their areas and report back to the Committee.

## **7. Urgent Business**

There were no items of Urgent Business.

## **8. Date of the Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee will take place on Wednesday 10 October 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