

Lancashire Children's Services Improvement Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 30th January, 2018 at 1.15 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
Jane Booth	Lancashire Safeguarding Children's Board
Stephen Cox	Secondary Schools
Tony Crane	Independent Chair
Chris Coyle	Lancashire County Council
Natasha Wright	Lancashire County Council
Amanda Hatton	Lancashire County Council
Simon Fisher	Lancashire County Council
Louise Burton	NHS Safeguarding
Stephen Belbin	Lancashire County Council
Angie Ridgwell	Lancashire County Council
John Readman	Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Phillippa Williamson	Lancashire County Council
Hazel Gregory	Blackpool Hospitals Teaching Foundation Trust
Josephine Lee	Lancashire County Council
Charlotte Ennis	Lancashire County Council
Helen Dixon	Lancashire Constabulary
Laura Higham	Lancashire County Council
Helen Hull	Lancashire County Council

Apologies:

Paul Wilcox	Voluntary Community Faith Sector
Bridgett Welch	Lancashire Care Foundation Trust
Debbie Duffell	Lancashire County Council
Ian Whitehead	Lancashire Constabulary
Christine Nuttall	

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair, Tony Crane, welcomed all to the meeting. Roundtable introductions were made. Apologies for absence were presented from Paul Wilcox - VCFS, Bridgett Welch – Lancashire Care Foundation Trust, Debbie Duffell – LCC, Ian Whitehead – Lancashire Constabulary and Christine Nuttall - LCC.

2. Minutes and actions from the last meeting

Resolved: The minutes of the last meeting held on 5th December 2017 were approved as an accurate record.

Matters Arising

John Readman, Interim Executive Director of Education and Children's Services, requested an update to be provided at a future Board meeting on the outcome of the CQC inspections which were due to take place in February 2018.

3. Purposeful Practice Board

Chris Coyle, Children's Social Care Senior Manager, Lancashire County Council reported that we needed to buy in involvement from other agencies for the Board and that a wide range of issues were looked at by the Board. Angie Ridgwell, Chief Executive asked how we ensured that basic common standards were being maintained. Chris Coyle reported that this was a top level board which could hold each area to account and that the plan at the last Board Meeting was to take it out to localities, although this would be gradual. Tony Crane stated it is important that we don't lose the link to the front line. Chris Coyle stated that compared to 18 months ago, the position is far more positive and which shouldn't be lost sight of.

Amanda Hatton, Director of Children's Services reported that this Board has an action plan which it is working to. Amanda also stated that Lancashire's caseloads were still the lowest in the region, which meant we were getting things right at the front door. Josephine Lee provided the most recent data for caseloads; the highest figure was 20.7 and the lowest was 17.5, the current average being 19.7. Tony Crane stated that this information should have been presented in the performance dashboard. It was noted that the ASYE level was a concern in some areas. A discussion took place around caseload numbers not reflecting complexity. Despite some comments that caseloads are starting to creep up, Amanda Hatton stated that social workers are busy but caseloads are manageable but more complex.

Angie Ridgwell asked whether the SEND report had had an impact on the way service users were using the Service. Chris Coyle reported that this was not the case as the SEND service was very different to Children's Social Care. However, it was pointed out that better links needed to be made with these services and in some instances, confidence had been affected. SEND social workers don't come into contact with locality social workers frequently but the Purposeful Practice Board can look at developing these links

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

4. DCS Progress and update covering the following (PowerPoint Presentation):

Amanda Hatton, gave a presentation to the Board containing DCS progress and a further update.

There were 2 issues that needed focussing on:

- Quality of Social Work Practice
- Preparation for monitoring visit

The last Ofsted Monitoring Visit letter, the performance dashboard and the SEND Inspection letter had been circulated to Board Members.

The monitoring visit was coming up and the full inspection could potentially take place at the end of April/early May, 2 months after the monitoring visit. Amanda reported that the Ofsted Inspectors had just been trained under the new Inspection Framework. The new Framework required focussed visits to take place which could either be in relation to an area of strength or an area of challenge.

Details of the Framework were provided to the Board and line of sight documents – one for Senior Management and one for Cabinet/Lead Members - were circulated to the Board. For Senior Management, in order to ensure effective knowledge of front line practice, the following core areas had been identified:

- Metrics
- Audit
- Direct observation of practice
- Feedback
- Deep dive
- External challenge and reviews

For Cabinet/Lead Members, creating a line of sight worked on two equally important levels:

- Firstly, by identifying strategic objectives – by clearly articulating these and ensuring everyone in the organisation knows what they are; and
- Secondly, by contributing to delivery of those objectives – understanding how any individual's actions within the organisation aligned to the strategic objectives.

County Councillor Williamson had felt this had been a really useful exercise; much of it we were already doing but it was very helpful in terms of oversight. Tony Crane felt this was a good approach but emphasised the need to put it into action.

Action: Amanda Hatton suggested a monthly report was needed that focussed on quality of practice and for the Board to look at it from an Ofsted perspective. This will be presented at the next Board.

The data provided in the presentation was accurate with most indicators moving in the right direction but in some respects we are "spinning plates". Focus on one area leads to improvement but can result in dips elsewhere. The figures in the North had significantly improved. The Board noted that assessment times had also started to improve. First line managers play a key role in using performance data to focus on practice but managers are using this data to different extents and so is a priority area to focus on.

It was reported that the Management Academy was due to start in April, although Amanda suggested bringing this date forward.

Tony Crane expressed concern about the rising number of Children Looked After – at 1,950 this remained inadequate. It was noted that around half of these children left care

after 1 year so we needed to think about why they were coming into care in the first place. At the end of November 2017, there were 18% of children placed with parents which also remained inadequate. We needed to think about planning permanence and managing risk. The percentage of privately fostered children who had visits within the required timescale was now at 100%. Tony Crane stated that work has taken place around edge of care, sufficiency and plans but what is the impact? Amanda Hatton stated that it was impacting differently in different areas i.e. children looked after numbers had gone down in Fylde and Wyre, but had increased in Preston and Burnley. Regional heat maps are accurate in terms of deprivation/austerity. One quarter of the children who came into care in April were in Preston. Permanence is an area requiring focus in the next plan, too much is being taken to court and Placement with Parent numbers are too high.

The decrease in the proportion of workers with a supervision remained low. The current figure was only around 70% so there needed to be a concerted focus on this as it is unacceptable. The Board noted that all localities now had performance clinics so this should not be an issue.

Action: The demand had increased dramatically, and a District level analysis of children looked after needed to be done. Work was currently being done with CLA on this and a report would be presented to the next Board meeting.

Consistently good feedback had been received for the Care Leavers Service. There was a need to understand exactly how this had been achieved and then relate it to other areas.

The audit had found that the percentage of children with 3 or more Social Workers was reducing, although it was still a challenge. In addition, there were some stubborn compliance issues. Amanda reported that Managers were responsible for around 5 Social Workers and therefore should be familiar with their caseloads.

Action: Jane Booth reported that the S.47 audit looked much better this time and that a report would be presented at the next meeting.

Reference was made to the external review, the headlines and next steps of which were:

- Ofsted Monitoring
- SEND Report
- Peer Challenge
- Annual conversation
- External review of MASH

In relation to SEND, Amanda emphasised that this had been a joint inspection involving a range of providers. There was learning in CSC in relation to safeguarding which could be passed through to the SEND Service. It was reported that governance around the 8 CCGs we interface with would be very difficult and there is a reluctance for them to all come together. Louise Burton, NHS Safeguarding, said an urgent action was for CCGs to work more effectively with the LA. Inspectors also wanted consistency with commissioning which was another priority we needed to look into as an appropriate standard was needed for Lancashire children. Tony Crane asked whether this could be escalated through the Health & Wellbeing Board agenda. County Councillor Driver

confirmed he had emphasised the need for CCGs to work better at the last H&WB meeting. Meetings are also taking place outside of the Board.

An initial meeting had been held with the DfE and NHS England and another meeting planned for the 1st March to put the details together. A written statement of action is required by 23rd April 2018. Amanda Hatton advised that we have moved on some issues raised in the inspection i.e. the local offer and DMO role.

Alison Aylott informed that Head teachers were not surprised at the outcome of the SEND inspection and which had been discussed at head teacher forums.

Tony Crane pointed out that whatever was in the staff plan needed to be in the CSIB plan. John Readman emphasised that a strategic approach to delivering CAF training was required in time for the next monitoring visit. We also needed to think about Elective Home Education as there was a 25 minutes discussion around this at the recent Ofsted annual conversation. Tony Crane stated that with regards to MASH, the audits have highlighted areas for development to be worked on and that given the developmental work that has taken place over the last few months, using the Council's and LSCB audits the Ofsted monitoring should be positive.

Action: A table was circulated providing a projection of what to expect in future months to focus the Improvement Plan. However, the Chair stated that the Board has not had a plan in place since October. A new 12 - week plan will be circulated for comment asap in order for the plan to be signed off at the next Board. The plan is to include the specific safeguarding issues raised through the SEND inspection to ensure coherence. Alison Aylott also asked for a list of acronyms to be circulated.

Resolved: The Board noted the DCS progress and update.

5. Children in Need/Child Protection Step Up and Step Down Focussed Discussion

A presentation was given on Child in Need/Child Protection Step Up and Step Down.

Helen Dixon, Inspector – Police Early Action Team reported that a morning triage was held at Moor Nook in Preston involving a range of agencies including the Police, Fire and Rescue, Mental Health, Alcohol Services, Housing and the Children and Family Wellbeing Service. Other agencies could be pulled in as necessary and it was noted there were different ways of engaging with families. Each agency could take their own cases, although consent was needed to share information.

A full time Police Officer was part of the Preston integrated team and representatives from one or two agencies would usually try to visit the families in need that same day. There may be families who had previously been involved with the Police so the Police would be aware that they may need supporting. However, it was noted that some families would not allow the Police access to their properties but would be happy to let other agencies in. There was some evidence of good outcomes from Standard Police referrals going into the direct from MASH into the Preston integrated team.

A query was raised about the cases that were categorised as requiring no further action that had gone through to the East early action team. It was noted that this may mean there was not considered to be a 'need' or that no consent had been obtained. There was a need to link education into the integrated teams and this was going to be discussed with Primary Heads in Lancashire. Further meetings are also planned between Children, Families and Wellbeing Service and the Police regarding the future of the Pilots.

Action: It was agreed that discussions needed to take place on a rollout plan for 12 multi agency venues and what the impact of this would be. There had been some benefits from undertaking the Pilots which will be discussed between the Police and Children, Families and Wellbeing Service. Some of the Police referrals received into the Preston Integrated teams had resulted in support being provided to some families.

Charlotte Ennis, Children & Family Wellbeing Service Manager, reported that there had been an increase in the number of step downs coming from the Social Worker into the team. It was important that any plan should be developed to follow the family and there was a need to promote the Children & Family Wellbeing Service to other agencies. A question was asked about whether there was any feedback from families. It was confirmed that there was an outcomes plan and that feedback was built into this system.

There had been an increase in the number of children in need and child protection cases in Preston over the last few months. Laura Higham, Senior Manager, Children's Services Preston, reported that this was being looked into and that, in respect of the cases that had gone to ICPC, the decision making at the point of ICPC had been correct. Tony Crane asked whether things had changed for families in Preston over the last 6 months, or whether the way we responded had changed. Laura confirmed that as the pathways process had changed, this may be the reason for the increase in volume in CIN and CP cases in Preston over the last few months. The Board noted that there was a high level of MARAC in Preston and also that there was a steady increase in support requests for early help in the area.

Action: Updated information regarding the current numbers of step up/ step down will be included in the Performance Dashboard and actions from the learning from this initiative to be included in 12 week plan.

Resolved: The Board noted the presentation on the Child in Need/Child Protection Step Up and Step Down process and the action being undertaken, including work with partners.

6. LSCB Project

Jane Booth, Independent Chair LSCB, gave a verbal update on the LSCB project which had been set up to improve effectiveness of joint working across Education, Police and Children's Social Care.

It was reported that the meetings had been arranged, the first of which was being held in the East today and another meeting planned for next week. A clear picture was needed of what was working well and how we could work across the board more effectively. One of the issues that needed addressing was the lack of early intervention support.

Action: It was suggested that pilot programmes be looked into and how these could be funded. We also needed to help schools feel more comfortable with risk management.

The Board noted that there was a strong model in Mental Health support teams which could be transferred into Child Protection.

Resolved: That the update on the LSCB project be noted.

7. Any other business

- Jane Booth informed the Board that a report on Section 47 Audit would be brought to a future meeting.
- Natasha Wright raised the issue that POWA had received positive praise during the SEND inspection and Young People's engagement continues to be a strength in Lancashire.

8. Date and Time of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next Board meeting would be held on Tuesday 27th February 2018 at 1.15pm in Committee Room C, County Hall, Preston.