

Lancashire Children's Services Improvement Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 27th February, 2018 at 1.15 pm in Committee Room 'C' (The Duke of Lancaster Room) - County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Geoff Driver CBE	Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Phillippa Williamson	Lancashire County Council
Alison Aylott	Primary Schools
Jane Booth	Lancashire Safeguarding Children's Board
Paul Wilcox	Voluntary Community Faith Sector
Tony Crane (Chair)	Independent Chair
Chris Coyle	Lancashire County Council
Natasha Wright	Lancashire County Council
Debbie Duffell	Lancashire County Council
Ian Whitehead	Lancashire Constabulary
Louise Burton	NHS Safeguarding
Angie Ridgwell	Lancashire County Council
John Readman	Lancashire County Council
Sally Allen	Lancashire County Council
Dr Sakthi Karunanithi	Lancashire County Council
Hazel Gregory	Blackpool Teaching Hospitals Foundation Trust
Anna Howarth	Lancashire Care Foundation Trust
Grant Murdoch	Lancashire County Council
Sam Gorton (Clerk)	Lancashire County Council
Vicky Gent	Lancashire County Council
Siobhan Collingwood	Lancashire County Council
Josephine Lee	Lancashire County Council

Apologies:

County Councillor Mrs Susie Charles	Lancashire County Council
Stephen Cox	Secondary Schools
Amanda Hatton	Lancashire County Council
Simon Fisher	Lancashire County Council

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair, Tony Crane welcomed all to the meeting. Roundtable introductions were made. Apologies for absence were presented as above.

2. Minutes and actions from the last meeting

Resolved: The minutes of the last meeting held on 30 January 2018 were approved as an accurate record with the following amendments:

Item 3 Purposeful Practice Board

Page 2, second paragraph, third sentence needs amending to read: 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 based on FTE including vacant posts.

Item 4 DCS Progress and Update

Page 5, second paragraph agreed to be amended to read: Alison Aylott informed the Board that Primary Headteachers were unsurprised at the outcome, but had been consistently raising concerns over the LA provision for the SEN/D both formally and informally via SENCOs and Primary Headteachers in Lancashire meetings and Sounding Board meetings for several years.

Matters Arising

Item 2 Minutes and Actions from the last meeting

Action 1: The outcomes of the CQC inspections will be shared when further information is available – Bridgett Welch.

Item 4 DCS Progress and Update

Action 2: A list of acronyms still needs to be circulated to the Improvement Board – John Readman.

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

Action 3: An update will be given at a future meeting on the discussions that 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 (CFWS) – Supt Ian Whitehead.

3. Purposeful Practice Board

Chris Coyle gave an update from the Purposeful Practice Board (PPB).

Work is still being done around improving the Lived Experience of the Child assessments which have been rated as good in audits, this now needs to be incorporated in the Care Plans. The Board is looking at good practice across the areas and putting it under one umbrella for all teams to carry out the same practice and not work in silos, this will also include how schools are involved in sharing their Lived Experience of the Child and ensuring that this is recorded too.

Workshops are being held researching practice and how to communicate with young people to get the best plans in place which all Social Workers attend and then these are repeated every six months for a refresh.

The PPB has lost some of its driving force, so the Board is looking at driving the momentum again and this can be done by setting specific targets which feeds into plans and visits. Compliance now needs to shift to practice and carrying out ways of working smarter, we cannot ask for them to do more as they are doing above and beyond already. We still need to try and shift culture ie use case summary documents instead of briefing notes. John Readman commented that it was more moving from compliance to discipline. Could look at carrying out visits on the risk of the child not the monthly statutory visits which would then mean that the child at risk would have more visits. Paul Wilcox stated that the PPB needs to ensure there are clear expectations and monitor outcomes.

There has been a change in the workforce recently and the Central Team are going through staffing issues where the North are more settled and positive. In the East, they are becoming a victim of their own success, where promotions are not available and there is a good management team in place, so staff will look elsewhere for promotion.

Action 4: The PPB needs to look at targets for the next three months and present these to the Improvement Board in March who will then select one target for the PPB to take forward and prioritise – Chris Coyle/PPB.

4. Executive Director Progress and Update

John Readman presented the attached PowerPoint to the Board.

Partnership Approach to SEND Improvement

The SEND report was devastating and a sense of failing, however from every crisis, there comes opportunity. Everybody is committed to improving the service.

Mark Youlton is the agreed Lead Chief Officer and investment for the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) and John and Mark are meeting shortly to discuss ways forward.

David Graham is meeting with the Chairs of Schools Associations (Primary Headteachers in Lancashire (PHiL), Lancashire Association of Secondary Headteachers (LASH) and Special Schools to review the inspection letter.

John Readman will also be chairing the SEND Partnership Board going forward.

The sign off of the written Statement of Action will be on 23 April 2018 and this will be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board and Cabinet also.

Ofsted Monitoring Visit – 27/28 February 2018

The last of the monitoring visits are taking place today and tomorrow in Accrington. Formal feedback will be received on 28 February 2018 and John Readman will be meeting to discuss the visit with the Lead Inspector.

At the introduction meeting a balanced view was given on the progress that had been made around MASH and police referrals and what the challenges still were on referrals to

Early Help. Ofsted have been talking to Managers and Practitioners and looking at tracked cases, speaking with Social Workers and looking at audit of supervision.

Supt Ian Whitehead stated that there currently 177 referrals not triaged or processed, however there are around 105 received every day and around 80 when the office is closed, so they come into a backlog before the day has even started. There is a continued plan to reduce the backlog and the Board needs to keep a watching brief on this.

Action 5: To monitor the backlog of Police Referrals not triaged – Improvement Board.

Progress since January 2018

The 12 week improvement plan is very much an activity plan.

In the January performance report, caseloads are good and the quality of training and development is also good. Still need to work on recruitment and retention of workforce.

Conversion rates across agencies have reduced to 29% which is in-line with Regional statistics, however still feel this is not the best use of resources.

Key Areas of Focus in Improvement Plan – March 2018

Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) of 29% was the best performance yet and now rated as Requires Improvement not Inadequate and as a result 1-3 years improved to 46.9% and is rated Outstanding.

Supervision in the last month has improved to 77% including Fostering, Adoption, Residential and Youth Offending Teams (FARY) and is now rated as Requires Improvement.

Sally Allen reported on the Audit findings on work that had been done with MASH. It was evidenced as Good and good use of the Continuum of Need with the threshold against level of risk with improved timeliness and life of the child.

Dr Sakthi Karunanithi reported that the quality of Child and Family Assessments had gone down and this was one indicator that needed watching. Some work is being done with the Lancashire Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) and he is hoping that buy-in from all organisations will help with the assessments.

PI Ref 3.4 on the Improvement Plan - % of children who are privately fostered who have visits within the required timescale in the last three months was 100% which was excellent.

PI Ref 2.7 - % of strategy discussions that include, Police, Health and Education is still not available.

Action 6: To follow up PI Ref 2.7 figures and provide them at the next meeting – Sally Allen.

Supervision figures need to improve from 70% to over 90%. Need to look at which areas this applies to and understand why it is not at target.

Action 7: % of supervisions not at target need to be tracked and looked at why they are not on target – Chris Coyle/Vicky Gent.

Sally Allen spoke to the Board on the key areas of focus in the Improvement Plan.

Effective Prevention: Includes where the LA intervene and gets Early Help involved. Train the Trainer training is underway with 160 training places available between April and May, once trained they will then go and train other workforce, so the Board were asked to urge staff to come forward and participate in the training. Training has been stepped up on the Risk Sensible Model which is taking place two days per month, again the Board were asked to urge staff to engage in the training.

Purposeful Practice: Prioritising a number of areas focusing on key elements of good social work practice and sharing that across the County through training sessions and workshops. Learning Development are supporting this training and these will be mandatory. The Lived in Experience of the Child training is being developed alongside the help of young people through videos such as Top Tips for Social Workers (Being a Good Corporate Parent), Sincerely You and using the Mind of My Own (MOMO) tool.

Permanence: Ensuring that the right decisions are made at the right time and consistently across the County. There are too many children in care and need to make sure that the right children are in care and move children out when safe to do so.

Workforce Strategy: Ensure that a suitably qualified workforce is in place, moral is good and harness and capitalise on that. Make sure there is good quality practice and agree there is a need to improve retention. The Social Work Academy has proved to be really effective and this is now being replicated with a Leadership Academy which is being finalised and the University selection who will develop the Academy is being selected and the decision will be made in April 2018.

Debbie Duffell informed the Board that the Step Up and Step Down process is consistently increasing and there are robust systems in place for the pathway to MASH. More work is required on the police vulnerable people (PVP) area.

Action 8: Step Up and Step Down update to be included on a future agenda – John Readman/Tony Crane.

The 12 weeks Improvement Plan was circulated in the agenda and if anybody has any comments on this to please email John Readman, email john.readman@lancashire.gov.uk or Grant Murdoch, email grant.murdoch@lancashire.gov.uk.

Siobhan Collingwood raised an issue with regards the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) in schools in which schools, feel that cases are being held up because of it and there are big implications. It is felt there is a lack of communication which is proving difficult with relationships. Clustering could help with this and proposals to introduce the hub and spoke model which will give support to child protection cases.

It was agreed that between now and the next meeting in March certain colleagues will meet to discuss initiatives, actions and specifics and bring these to the March meeting.

Action 9: To discuss initiatives, actions and specifics around improving relationships with schools on the CAF and look at clustering – John Readman, Dr Sakthi Karunanithi, Jane Booth, Siobhan Collingwood and feedback to a future Board meeting.

Inspection Readiness

The Single Inspection Framework four full week inspection is anticipated to be around May to July 2018). The key judgement areas are as follows:

Key Judgements covered in the inspection will be as follows:

- The experience and progress of children who need help and protection
- The experiences and progress of children looked after and achieving permanence
 - ❖ Adoption performance
 - ❖ The experiences and progress of care leavers
- Leadership, Management and Governance
- The effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board

As a Board we need to ensure everybody is ready and John indicated to the "Are We Ready" slide for example probes.

The Board agreed that a self-assessment session be on the agenda for the meeting in March with a formal self-assessment taking place at the April meeting, where colleagues can discuss how as a Board it will contribute as a partnership.

Action 10: To ensure that self-assessment items are included on the March and April agendas – John Readman.

Action 11: To look at the single inspection framework document prior to the meeting in March – All Board Members

Action 12: Link to the framework document to be circulated to the Board – Grant Murdoch/Sally Allen/Sam Gorton.

Angie Ridgwell asked how we as an Authority can help Health and Police in inspection preparation. Louise Burton replied that health will circulate to networks and ask for contributions and work with CCGs and designated networks and safeguarding leads.

John Readman indicated that there would be a Task and Finish Group convened for inspection preparation with key organisations.

Conversations need to be had with frontline services.

Action 13: A task and finish group be set up with key organisations for inspection preparation and readiness – John Readman.

5. Lancashire Constabulary Update

Superintendent Ian Whitehead gave the Board an update on the recent inspections that had taken place four weeks apart, the HMIC National Child Protection Inspection and the HMIC Vulnerability Effectiveness Inspection. It is anticipated that the force will receive a "Good" grading in the overall Effectiveness inspection however several recommendations for improvement will be published in the Child Protection Inspection. In particular the Child Protection Inspection highlighted there was an absence of the Voice of the Child and supervisory intrusion around safeguarding which is a big challenge for the Police. Record keeping was also identified including around strategy/multi-agency discussions. A senior leader seminar took place on 26 January 2018 and plans are in place to address the issues moving forward.

There were 11 recommendations and a timescale of three months on some recommendations, however the journey of others will take much longer.

Joint inspections were also discussed going forward and Supt Ian Whitehead asked the Board how we could connect it all together. The Police are already in discussion with the LSCB and an initial discussion has taken place. Ian's team will feed into the Quality Assessment and Improvement Group and look at the Voice of the Child which is not good in various agencies and work on this collectively rather than individual organisations.

Action 14: Supt Ian Whitehead to liaise with the Chair and John Readman re future reporting of progress into the Improvement Board.

6. Section 47 Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) Audit Findings

Jane Booth presented the attached presentation to the Board on Strategy Discussions Re-Audit of practice in respect of S47 investigations. The report attached to the agenda gave a detailed overview on the findings and the key concerns that emerged from the original audit and recommendations that were made.

Jane Booth commented that some practices were still needed to collectively decide as to whether a Section 47 was needed. As a result of Audit, Section 47s were the right decisions.

90% of strategy discussions have management oversight and rationale to proceed to Section 47.

Hazel Gregory asked if there was a locality difference. Jane agreed to find out.

Action 15: To find out if there is a locality difference in the strategy discussions – Jane Booth.

7. Children Looked After Focused Discussion (Looking forward - including findings from the District analysis)

Josephine Lee presented the Board with the attached PowerPoint.

There are currently over 1900 children in care in Lancashire and this number is high. We need to ensure that the right children are in care and those that can be returned safely need to be returned.

Vicky Gent confirmed an approach that the East took, over two years ago which is a systematic approach to look at new Children Looked After (CLA) and those already in care and look at processes and procedures which is a whole scale culture shift, however, worked well. The East focussed heavily on 10-15 year olds and large families and how they have come on that journey and looked at certain elements. This is now to be rolled out to the North and Central teams. There are some easy wins as it is easier to put a child on a care order than take them off.

Entry in and discharge out is the concern. Adoption rate is good. Should not be targeting the 16+ age group as independent living should be sought for them. The reason the figures have spiked is because of the Homeless protocol.

Looking at the bigger picture, there is not enough in-house fostering or residential placements and independent living accommodation is over capacity.

Michael Nunn was welcomed to the meeting and spoke about the new Adolescent Support Unit that is opening at the end of March 2018. The team is recruited and Ofsted are on board. Cases have been identified for when the Unit opens and hopefully this will have an impact on the numbers of 10-15 year olds not ending up in care.

There is a three bedded complex needs home opening at Grange Avenue and the Bungalow will be a 1-2 bedded highly complex unit, which is a step down from a Secure Unit. Staff have been appointed in these settings however, until they are up and running, are currently supporting other services in the Community and in various locations.

Outreach support is being extended to families providing more prevention and re-unification.

With regards preventing children coming into care and exiting them out of care there needs to be an all-agency joined up approach. The Permanence and Child Protection Board have health reps on it which will bring together a collective understanding of children looked after and care planning.

There needs to be more multi-agency working and all need to do things differently and safely.

Action 16: A future report to the Board to be planned in Spring/Summer to report on partnership progress.

8. Any Other Business

There was no other business received.

9. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 27 March 2018 at 1.15pm in Committee Room 'B' – The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston, PR1 8RJ.