

Lancashire County Council

Corporate Parenting Board

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 17th September, 2019 at 6.00 pm
in Committee Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston**

Present: Members

County Councillor Ian Brown	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Stephen Clarke	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor David Foxcroft	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Julie Gibson	- Lancashire County Council
Marieta Birt	- Fostering Forum
Liz Donnelly- Nelson	- Adoption
Barbara Bath	- Fostering, Adoption, Residential and YOT Team, LCC
Jake	- LINX Representative
Charlotte	- LINX Representative
Natasha	- LINX Representative
Rachel	- LINX Representative

Co-opted members

Angela Epps	- Fostering Providers
Audrey Swann	- Headteacher, Vulnerable and Looked After Children
Roxanne McAllister	- Leaving Care, LCC
Mia Leyland	- Barnardo's
Natasha Wright	- Barnardo's

Other Attendees

Jane Hylton	- Leaving Care, LCC
Roxanne McAllister	- Leaving Care, LCC
Michael Walder	- Business Intelligence Team, LCC
Sam Gorton	- Democratic Services, LCC
Shaeda Alam	- Corporate Parenting, LCC
Gavin Redhead	- Participation, LCC

1. Introductions and Apologies

All were welcomed to the meeting and apologies were received from County Councillor Jayne Rear, Caroline Waldron, Anna Howarth, Amanda Mansfield, Lynda Pearson, Rachel Blundell, Stephen Young, Dylan Williams, Judith Gault, Tracey Ellmore and Neil Kelly.

County Councillor David Foxcroft, Champion for Young People was welcomed to his first meeting as a member of the Board.

2. Notes of the Meeting and Matters Arising from 22 May 2019

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes and the minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

3. Membership and Terms of Reference

The Board agreed the membership and terms of reference for the municipal year 2019/2020.

4. Ministerial Roundtable Discussion with Personal Advisors

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

5. LINX

Lancashire's Children in Care County (LINX) gave feedback to the Board following the young person led Corporate Parenting Board meeting that was held at Hothersall Lodge on 24 July 2019.

The Board took part in archery, low ropes and a team challenge each linked to key themes on placements, mental health and communication and trust. During each activity young people worked alongside Board members building trust and communicating. Following each exercise, feedback was given as to what advice members would give to young people, what ideas they had following the findings from the exercise and what their promise to the young people would be. Young people also filled in the same feedback form too. These were shared at the meeting with comments from the young people being that some felt that the feedback was disappointing, some of it did not make sense to the young people and not all of the questions were answered. Some feedback that was received was "Given the lack of finance to mental health services for children and young people, we should promote the early intervention support out there and ensure in the new Hertfordshire teams we develop that we have good provision for mental health in children and young people". The Hertfordshire model was something that the Council was looking to adopt in the very near future which was around Family Safeguarding.

One clear message that came from the day was that members needed to think about language used when talking to young people and not use acronyms or assume that young people understood terminology/protocols/the care system and that this was explained at an appropriate level for young people to understand.

Resolved: That an item on the Hertfordshire model be brought to the next meeting of the Board in November.

Overall the Board felt that the meeting was an excellent afternoon and thanks was given to Gavin Redhead, Mia Leyland, Dylan Williams and Sam Gorton for organising it and to the staff at Hothersall Lodge who supported the event.

6. Children in Care and Care Leavers Performance and Management Information

Michael Walder, Business Intelligence Manager provided an overview of the current standard monthly performance information that Business Intelligence produced in relation to Children Looked After and Care Leavers

This information was available for members and Michael Walder agreed to send a link out so this could be accessed.

The Permanence and Children in our Care Board received this information also on a weekly basis and used it for monitoring.

If young people wished to access the information, Business Intelligence would visit them to explain the report and help them to understand it more.

Resolved: That the Board were asked if there was any specific information they wished to receive, to inform Sam Gorton and she would discuss with Business Intelligence.

7. Lancashire's Care Leavers Report

Shaeda Alam, Corporate Parenting Consultant presented the Care Leavers Report to the Board which, following the Ofsted Inspection in 2015, identified the need to improve support to care leavers in Lancashire. This report was to provide an update on how the Lancashire Care Leavers Service had been adapted to improve the offer to care leavers since then and to make recommendations for further improvement.

The Lancashire Corporate Parenting Strategy 2018-2022 makes clear the Council's ambition for children and young people who were looked after and this ambition extended to young people who were also leaving care.

The existing Leaving Care Service needs reforming to meet this ambition. After engaging with Care Leavers in a variety of ways including face to face interviews and a questionnaire, and through undertaking a review of the Leaving Care Service this report presented a number of options for improvement.

The report also gave a summary of the key findings and Appendix 'A' detailed where the service was now, changes that needed to be made, what was required to deliver the change, how it would be measured and the outcomes.

The Board were also informed that there were going to be three Care Leaver Hubs which would be accessible to care leavers in the localities North, Central and East which would be up and running by December where young people could access help, advice and support, not just from the Council but from partners also.

The Corporate Parenting Board would hold to account the Care Leavers Service and the Improvement Plan and would request regular reports to the Board.

Resolved: That the Corporate Parenting Board:

- i) Adopted a revised approach to support care leavers in Lancashire that realised the ambitions set out within the Corporate Parenting Strategy.
- ii) Supported the redesign of the Leaving Care Service.
- iii) Supported the actions set out within 'Appendix A' of the report attached to the agenda to address the key messages emerging from the service review and consultation with care leavers.

8. Independent Reviewing Officers Annual Report

Paul McIntyre, Safeguarding Manager updated the Board on the key findings from the Independent Reviewing Service Annual Report 2018-2019 in the PowerPoint attached.

The report highlighted that although the number of children and young people looked after or subjected to a Child Protection Plan had increased by 7.5% during 2018/19, a very high proportion of these received a timely review within statutory timescales. Almost all children and young people participated in their review either directly or indirectly.

The Board queried as to why only 59% of Personal Education Plans were up to date and Officers stated that the figures were not accurate on the system and should have been 76%. There was now a revised template being used which would strengthen this delivery. Questions included in the Personal Educational Plans had been revised to ensure they were fit for purpose and that schools could now access it and complete the plan along with the Social Workers. Hopefully this would ensure that more plans were kept up to date.

Young people commented that they felt communication was lacking around Personal Education Plans and some indicated they had been waiting a month to receive theirs.

Resolved: Audrey Swann agreed to speak to the young people out of the meeting and pick the issue up around communication and waiting times.

Young people also questioned as to why only 93% of looked after children had a Personal Education Plan and it was explained that this would be to do with young people only just coming into care or maybe new to the county and the plan would be in progress however not completed. The plans data changes every day as this was live information.

The Board were informed that every young person who had a Personal Education Plan should have a Life Story book and that this belonged to the young person. How and when this information was received was up to the young person and where it was stored was their decision also. Officers would support young people with this and negotiate with them the right time to access their Life Story book and offer support and guidance when in receipt of it.

With regards next steps and future objectives, it was recognised that there was more to be done to ensure that first line managers and Independent Reviewing Officers challenged and directed practice to achieve consistently good service and that they would continue to address this through joint training and development. Children's Services was committed to developing a Family Safeguarding Model and this would change how the Independent Reviewing Officer Service delivered looked after children and child protection reviews, with an emphasis on working 'with' (as opposed to 'doing to') families to co-produce planned support. A focus on achieving permanence and supporting this through Life Story Books would be a priority for looked after children.

Resolved: That following on from the Annual Report and discussions around it that the Board have items at future meetings with regards to:

- Health assessments
- Personal Education Plans
- Life Story Work

9. Action Plan

The Corporate Parenting Strategy sets out nine objectives which the Board has discussed over the last 12 months. Alongside this strategic Board the operational Permanence and Children in our Care Board also meets which is a multi-agency meeting and this progresses the actions from the nine objectives.

The plan that the operational group works with is a lengthy document which has been condensed for the Corporate Parenting Board and was attached to the agenda.

The plan is RAG rated with red = incomplete, amber = slippage, green = on track and blue = completed.

The Corporate Parenting Board would receive the action plan at each meeting alongside the performance information and identify topics and issues it wished to scrutinise further and this would form a work plan for future meetings of the Board.

It was also reiterated that the role of the Lancashire's Children in Care Council was to represent all children in care and care leavers and that young people attending the meeting should be a mix of young people and care leavers and the views of other young people not just those attending the meeting.

10. Any Other Business

The Chair congratulated Sam Gorton on being nominated for a Children's Services Rise Award for her contribution to Corporate Parenting Board, leading on the Care Leavers Christmas hampers and helping with the care leavers Christmas lunch at Barnardo's. The Board wished her luck at the awards ceremony.

11. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 26 November 2019 at 6pm in the Duke of Lancaster Room – Committee Room 'C', County Hall, Preston.

The Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report 2018-19

Summary Presentation to Corporate Parenting Board 17th September

*Andy Smith (Head of Service for Safeguarding, Inspection and Audit /
Paul McIntyre (Safeguarding Manager)*



Overview of the IRO Service

45 full time equivalent IROs with average of 78 children / young people on their caseload

Undertake chairing of Child Protection Conferences and Child Looked After Reviews

Statutory role (IRO Handbook) to monitor the quality of corporate parenting provided to looked after children

Ofsted (August 2018) inspection highlighted the need to strengthen critical challenge amongst IROs and first line managers



Performance 2018/19

CLA numbers increased by 7.5% but vast majority receive and take part in a timely review of their care plan

IROs pushing greater use of 'All About Me' consultation documents

CP numbers increased by 10% but 95% of reviews were held within timescales

More children stayed on a plan over 2 years or made subject of a plan for a second time

IRO Challenge & Footprint

767 in 17/18 to 1705 in 18/19

85% completion of mid-point monitoring by IROs

Joint training / learning circles with managers to promote consistent understanding of what is 'good'

IRO Managers undertaking regular audit activity on cases with a focus on impact of IRO involvement on outcomes

Health Assessments & PEPs

Updated template guidance for the CLA Review to ensure consistent focus

85% of looked after children have a Health Assessment, 56% within timescale – project group established to drive this

93% of looked after children have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) but only 59% are up to date. PEP process and template updated to strengthen delivery

Permanence

Identified by Ofsted (2018) and reflected in improvement plans

Clearer understanding and tracking of Permanence

PROs monitoring and driving via CLA Review and within Permanence Panels

Placement Stability and Disruption Meetings established

Life Story Work

Next Steps

Family Safeguarding Model & Strengths-Based Practice

Strengthen understanding of 'good' in respect of plans and outcomes / impact

Build on improved IRO challenge to ensure consistency and evidence of impact on the quality of care / support

Delivery of Permanence including placement stability, discharge of Care Orders and reunification

Review of IRO additional duties outside of core function

