

Lancashire County Council

Corporate Parenting Board

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 27th July, 2017 at 1.30 pm in
Committee Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston**

Present: Members

County Councillor Ian Brown	-	Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Andrew Gardiner	-	Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Phillippa Williamson	-	Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Stephen Clarke	-	Lancashire County Council
Jane Simpson	-	representing Foster Carers
Catherine	-	representing Adoption
Amanda Hatton	-	Director of Children's Services, LCC
Sam R	-	LINX Representative
Bradley	-	LINX Representative
Sam W	-	LINX Representative
Kris	-	LINX Representative
Michelle	-	LINX Representative
Iqra	-	LINX Representative
Nicole	-	LINX Representative
Liam	-	LINX Representative
Ellie	-	LINX Representative
Natasha	-	LINX Representative
Mark	-	LINX Representative

Co-opted members

Audrey Swann	-	Headteacher, Vulnerable and Looked After Children
Amanda Mansfield	-	Independent Reviewing Officers
Francis Ashcroft	-	Agency Residential
Mark Cartridge	-	Agency - Fostering
Dylan Williams	-	Barnardo's

Other Attendees

Kirsty Clarke	-	Lancashire Children's Rights Society
Jane Hylton	-	Leaving Care, LCC
Barbara Bath	-	Fostering, Adoption, Residential and YOT Team, LCC
Carole Bateson	-	Department of Work and Pensions
Maria Stephens	-	Children's Rights Alliance for England
Two Members of Staff	-	Sheffield City County CPB
Four Young People	-	Sheffield City County CPB

1. Introductions and Apologies

All were welcomed to the meeting and apologies were received and noted from Debbie Ross, Stela Stansfield and Nicola Bamford.

The Chair also welcomed six members (two staff and four young people) from Sheffield City Council's Corporate Parenting Board who were observing the meeting.

2. Notes of the Meeting and Matters Arising from 15 June 2017

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and there were no matters arising from them.

3. LINX Activities

LINX delivered a Care Leaver Sanctions activity, where the Board was split into three groups and a different amount of money was given to each table and they had to use it for electricity, TV licence, water rates, insurance, transport, food etc. One table was given nothing, as their benefits had been sanctioned. The aim of this activity was to show how hard it was to manage finances and even more so when benefits have been sanctioned and in some cases, no family to turn to for help.

The Board then took part in a Care Leaver Sanctions quiz which is attached.

4. What our Elected Members have been doing

There was nothing to report on this item, as the members had only just been appointed to the Board.

5. Update from the Director of Children's Services (DCS)

Ofsted

They have recently carried out a two day monitoring visit on Children Looked After (CLA) and Care Leavers and there has been really good feedback. They reported back on the young people they had met and said that they were the most inspirational they had ever met and that Lancashire was very lucky to work with them. Ofsted were also impressed with the staff too however, did comment that further work is still required on retention of social workers. Ofsted will be back again in November 2017 on another monitoring visit, this time focusing on Children in Need (CiN). A massive thanks was given to everyone involved, especially the young people.

Residential Services

Ofsted had also undertaken an inspection of some of our Residential Services as there had been concerns previously. This time The Grange was given a rating of 'Good'.

Boing Boing

Action: Amanda Hatton to feedback at the next CPB meeting in December on the progress of Boing Boing for Lancashire.

Council Tax Exemption for Care Leavers

Care Leavers who live in Lancashire should all be receiving letters shortly with regards the Council Tax Exemption that was agreed by the Deputy Leader in May 2016. The Council Tax will be backdated to April 2017.

However, if a care leaver lives outside of Lancashire but are a Lancashire Care Leaver ie living in Blackpool, they are not exempt as the District Council has not agreed to this.

Action: Amanda Hatton will consider the options for this and report to CPB on next steps.

6. Educational Attainments

Audrey Swann presented the attached PowerPoint to the Board. It was noted that how attainment is measured now has changed significantly. Primary age groups and up to the end of Key Stage 3 (KS3), achievement is now based on Age Related Expectation (ARE) – the National Curriculum levels have gone. In Secondary (to the end of KS4) 5 A*-C is no longer the measure. Attainment is now measured by Attainment 8 – a score given for grades achieved in 8 subjects. English and Maths scores are doubled. Unfortunately it is not possible to compare attainment and progress with last year's results as the measures have changed so much, however Lancashire also measure how CLA are doing at school in other ways ie progress with learning, attendance at school, wellbeing, behaviour and risk of being excluded. Each pupil is given a colour for each of the measures: green – doing really well, amber – not quite there but still on track and red – concern. Pupils who are red will be seen every month by the Service, who will also speak to the Designated Teacher and put plans in place. A notable issue is around the Maths attainments at KS2, and one of the major problems is moving school placements, as Maths is not taught the same in every school. This is something that is being looked into. Foster carers also need to ensure that the children they are caring for are taking eight subjects as they carry scores, if not they will be marked '0'. If CLA are in special needs provision, they can still take GCSEs and foster carers should also be looking at young people pursuing these.

With regards the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG), each local authority is allocated funding based on £1,900 per CLA. The Virtual Headteacher has to manage and allocate the funding which has to be based on needs that are identified in the personal education plan (PEP). There is also a section on the PEP about what the impact will be and then on next PEP what the impact has been.

Action: Audrey Swann to ensure that more clarity is given to schools on PPG and high need and that schools can apply for both.

The Headteacher's report is written annually, and Audrey agreed to send this to LINX and then go and meet with them to discuss it further.

Action: Audrey Swann to meet with LINX, following the Headteacher's Report being sent to them.

7. Children's Rights Service

Kirsty Clarke presented the attached PowerPoint to the Board and they noted the Annual Report that was attached to the agenda.

There was an issue raised as to whether care placement issues that were received by the Children's Rights Service were fed back to Lancashire County Council? Kirsty confirmed that all issues were relayed to Social Workers (SWs) and Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs). The Children's Rights Service cannot however, influence a decision as it is the funding authority that makes the care placement decision.

8. Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)

Carole Bateson, Service Delivery Coach from the DWP was welcomed to the meeting. Young people had requested prior to the meeting, further information on when sanctions were put in place. In most cases Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) sanctions will be four weeks, a persistent JSA claimant may find some of those climbing to 13 weeks. Three years is rarely used and mostly in fraudulent cases. These sanctions will also stop housing benefit claims. From a sanction being put in place Hardship can be applied for, if granted, this will usually be a payment of 40% of benefit for the rest of the sanction period, but will put housing benefits back in payment. An appointment will need to be booked and a form collected for that appointment along with a bank statement/mini statement dated for the day of the appointment.

Income Support claims are slightly different and a phone call followed by a letter for failing to attend (FTA) will be done, the letter gives the Care Leaver eight days to contact the DWP. If there is no contact at eight days the sanction will then be put on benefits, it will be lifted when the Care Leaver has contacted the DWP and attended another appointment.

Carole reiterated once again that young people have to tell the DWP that they are Care Leavers and that the DWP are there to work with them not against them.

Benefits are the young person's responsibility and to ensure they receive what they are entitled to, they have to tell the DWP regarding their circumstances.

A meeting is planned with Lancashire County Council and Tracey Ellmore for 7 September 2017, to start working in partnership with the DWP and put protocols in place to support Care Leavers, and liaise with Social Workers and Leaving Care Workers on supporting young people in the meetings with DWP.

Carole was thanked for her attendance at the meeting.

9. LINX (Lancashire's Children in Care Council)

Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE)

Mark (Care Leaver) and Maria Stephens (CRAE) discussed the early stages of the project that CRAE are working on which was a report to the United Nations, before going to Geneva to speak directly to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Mark and Maria outlined the campaign so far and how the CRAE have decided on using Homelessness and B&B accommodation as the campaign topic. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child Concluding Observations 2016 are [here](#).

Top Tips for Social Workers Video

The Board were shown a video on Being a Good Corporate Parent that is now being shown to all new Social Workers, when they start at the Social Work Academy. The Board felt that this video was a fantastic tool and that it would be good to be shown nationally as well as within the Council to make all employees and Elected Members aware of what a good corporate parent is.

Action: Amanda Hatton agreed to look further into allowing this video to be shared and used outside the Authority.

What LINX Have Been Doing

LINX presented the PowerPoint attached and there were no issues arising from it.

LINX Update

LINX presented the slide attached on what it has been doing since the last CPB meeting and there were no issues arising from it.

10. Any Other Business

Sheffield City Council thanked the Board for allowing them to attend the meeting and will feed back to their Board the benefits they felt by having young people attend the meeting and present items on the agenda.

11. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday, 7 September 2017 at 6.00pm in the Duke of Lancaster Room – Committee Room 'C', County Hall, Preston. This is the young person led meeting and will be chaired by LINX.