

Lancashire County Council

Corporate Parenting Board

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 23rd January, 2019 at 6.00 pm
in Savoy Suite 1 - County Hall - The Exchange**

Present: Members

County Councillor Ian Brown	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Phillippa Williamson	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Stephen Clarke	- Lancashire County Council
Sally Allen	- Interim Director of Children's Services, LCC
Marieta Birt	- Fostering Forum
Michelle	- LINX Representative
Kris	- LINX Representative

Co-opted members

Caroline Waldron	- Safeguarding and Looked After Children, East Lancs CCG and BwD CCG
Amanda Mansfield	- Independent Reviewing Officer, LCC
Dylan Williams	- Barnardo's
Yoni Ejo	- Leaving Care, LCC

Other Attendees

Jane Hylton	- Leaving Care, LCC
Tracey Ellmore	- Department for Work and Pensions
Barbara Bath	- Fostering, Adoption, Residential and YOT Team, LCC
Neil Kelly	- The Children's Society
Debra Jones	- Democratic Services, LCC
Natasha Wright	- Barnardo's
Aaron Walmsley- Fishwick	- Apprentice, LCC
Reece Hobin	- Apprentice, LCC
Gavin Redhead	- Participation Lead, LCC
Rachel Blundell	- Financial Intelligence Manager, LCC
Sam Gorton	- Democratic Services, LCC

1. Introductions and Apologies

All were welcomed to the meeting and apologies were received and noted from County Councillors Gardiner and Gibson, Catherine, Michelle Davies, Audrey Swann, Roxanne McAllister and Stephen Young.

Edwina Grant OBE, Executive Director of Education and Children's Services introduced herself to the Board and informed them of the two main areas she would be wanting the Board to focus on. These were:

- i) Education – educational attainments for children looked after and care leavers is not quite as good as it could be and not consistent enough. This whole area needs looking at and this is something the Board can take forward at a future meeting.
- ii) Accommodation – where are all Lancashire children and young people in care as well as those placed in Lancashire from other Authorities living, was it safe and secure and what people can offer our children and young people, ie district councils.

CC Brown confirmed that the Board would ensure that the May meeting would be on housing and accommodation and representatives from the district councils would be invited to attend.

Resolved: That CC Brown agreed to liaise further with Edwina Grant OBE and Sally Allen, Interim Director for Children's Services with regards the May 2019 Corporate Parenting Board meeting to ensure we have representation from the District Councils in attendance.

2. Notes of the Meeting and Matters Arising from 27 November 2019

The minutes from the previous meeting held on 27 November 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

3. Objective 3 from the Corporate Parenting Strategy

Jane Hylton, Leaving Care Development Officer, Lancashire County Council gave an update on Lancashire's Care Leavers Local Offer and in setting up the Local Offer had been working closely with other Authorities and sharing good practice and that other Authorities were impressed by what Lancashire was offering.

The Local Offer has been developed over the last 12 months and a lot of work and consultation with young people has taken place. It is still a work in progress, however the progress made is on the right track.

Aaron Walmsley-Fishwick gave a demonstration to the Board on how to search for the website by searching for Lancashire Care Leaver Local Officer or find it via Lancashire County Council's Youth Zone page <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/youthzone/care-leavers-local-offer/>.

Board members were asked to partner up with a young person and use an electronic device to search for the webpage and navigate around it.

Following this exercise, comments were received from the Board on how they found the website. Comments were as follows:

- Tracey Ellmore, Department for Work and Pensions commented that there were updates on Universal Credits required.
- Possibly look at amending the title "Who is a Care Leaver" to "What Am I Entitled To" and then putting a link to "Who is a Care Leaver" on the webpage.
- Need to ensure colours are suitable on the webpage for dyslexia/colour blindness.
- Natasha Wright to be included in the Barnardo's contact list.
- Clarification on areas need to be included on the website ie where North, South, Central and East covers so young people can see which area they are living in.
- To liaise with Caroline Waldron on GPs and Dentists information and anything else health related that would be beneficial to care leavers.
- Ensure the link is also available on the Lancashire County Council internet and intranet.

Resolved: That Jane Hylton to ensure that all comments above are actioned.

Personal Advisers, Independent Reviewing Officers and Care Leaver Social Workers needs to spend time with young people to navigate them around the website. Also need to be signposting colleagues and care leavers to the website as well.

If there are any updates ie staff, changes in legislation, to ensure that they are emailed to the mailbox careleaverLO@lancashire.gov.uk.

Any events to be shared can be submitted via the website also.

It was suggested that Permanence and Corporate Parenting Board and partner agencies have the Lancashire Care Leavers Local Offer link on their webpages. Also have all the Local Offers from all Authorities on the Gov.uk website.

Resolved: That Tracey Ellmore agreed to look at having the link available on the Gov.UK website.

It would also be very useful for support groups for foster carers to understand the Local Offer and it would be beneficial for the young people to present this to them. Marieta Birt agreed to take this to the Fostering Forum meeting and if agreed would take this forward with Jane Hylton.

Resolved: That Marieta Birt agreed to raise the idea at Fostering Forum and if they were in agreement with young people presenting the Local Offer at the Support Groups to contact Jane Hylton to arrange this with Barnardo's and LINX.

Jane Hylton requested that the Board read the National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers' First Year Report from the Department for Education. Mark Riddell MBE, National Implementation Adviser for care leavers had visited over 40 local Authorities and hopefully would be coming to Lancashire in the near future.

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

Since the last meeting LINX and care leavers had been involved with Liverpool City Council's Children in Care Council in recruiting staff for two new residential homes in Liverpool.

Sue Prynn, Department for Work and Pensions was welcomed to the meeting and discussed barriers that care leavers faced when applying for work which had been shared with her first hand from care leavers she had spoken too on Universal Credit and support they received, good and bad, from staff at the Department for Wok and Pensions.

The Board were informed of the discretionary fund from £100-£300 which was available via the work coach which helped fund transport including for interviews and clothing for interviews.

Once again it was reiterated that if care leavers disclosed their circumstances it could be kept on file so that staff at the Department for Work and Pensions could offer the right advice and benefits for them.

Department for Work and Pensions were also looking at revisiting their questions for when a care leaver attends for their first visit.

The biggest issue for the Department for Work and Pensions is not knowing when a care leaver is approaching 18 years of age. This is something that needs to be agreed with Lancashire County Council and the Department for Work and Pensions, however data protection rules have to be adhered to. There is a Care Leaver Covenant which is to be agreed by the Department for Work and Pensions and the Local Authority that has not been signed up to by Lancashire County Council as of present.

Resolved: That County Councillor Ian Brown agreed to take this forward and discuss further with Sally Allen, Acting Director of Children's Social Care and Barbara Bath, Head of Fostering, Adoption, Residential and Youth Offending the Care Leaver Covenant and the benefits this would have in working with the council and the Department for Work and Pensions.

Tracey Ellmore complimented the young people for their presentations to staff at various job centres and wanted to roll this out to all 22 job centres where young people shared their life experiences. In order to roll this out to all the job centres it would be useful to do this via a video, instead of the young people having to visit all the job centres and if this is not viable then look at using the telekit equipment or getting all staff in one place for young people to deliver it once.

5. Objective 7 from the Corporate Parenting Strategy

Jane Hylton, Leaving Care Team and Rachel Blundell, Policy, Information and Commissioning (Start Well) Team presented this item to the Board.

The Board participated in an exercise and split into three groups and worked alongside the young people who had accessed the setting home allowance. Comments from the group work are attached.

Rachel presented the PowerPoint attached to the Board, explaining the current payment methods and the issues young people have reported they face with these methods. Young people reported that they found practices were different in each of the areas which they found hard to understand especially when they talked to other care leavers across the County. Also there were issues with driving lessons and payments with some instructors having to wait up to 60 days for payments and therefore cancelling future lessons for the young people.

Resolved: That Rachel Blundell will look further at the issues of different practices across the County with regards setting up home allowances and issues with driving lesson payments

Going forward, there are proposals for a pre-paid card for young people making their first move to a property, which would be far more flexible than the current payment scheme. The card would be loaded with funds incrementally and used with a PIN number in the same way as any debit/credit card, however no cash withdrawals. Each card would be operational for 12 months and then cancelled and any funds moved back to the central fund. Each Personal Advisor team would operate a 'team card' and any setting up home allowance items would be purchased via this after the first 12 months when the young person's cards have been cancelled. The pilot would be reviewed after one year.

Plans for these proposals are to be presented to the council's Senior Management Team on 5 February 2019.

Resolved: That the young people were happy with proposals and welcomed this possible change to the setting up home allowance.

6. Young People's Benchmarking Forum

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

7. Any Other Business

Corporate Parenting Video for PROUD Event

The Board were asked if they would be involved with a video for the PROUD Event for Children Looked After and Care Leavers to be shown in the night.

Resolved: That the Board agreed to be involved with the video for PROUD. Gavin Redhead would take this forward and contact the Board members as necessary.

Care Leaver Christmas Hampers

Sam Gorton report back on the success of the Care Leaver Christmas hampers that were distributed during the month of December. Donations were received staff at the county council, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Rainbows Development Centre, BT Lancashire Services, Barnardo's, Children's Society and family and friends of Colleagues. Attendees at the Lancashire Day Event also gave donations and proceeds from the sale of Lancashire badges were also donated raising £874.86 which was used to buy more gifts and also vouchers for care leavers who did not receive a hamper. Hampers and donations were split as follows:

East - 170 hampers and £200 of vouchers.

North – 80 hampers and £200 of vouchers and two large boxes full of household items for the North to distribute.

Central – 80 hampers and £200 of vouchers and one box of female gifts, two boxes full of food and chocolates and one box of household items for Central to distribute.

20 bags for life hampers full of food and gifts for the Care Leavers Christmas meal on Saturday 22 December.

In total, there had been 410 care leavers reached in hampers and vouchers with the additional boxes of goods reaching many more, so approximately 500 care leavers.

We are hoping that this could be reciprocated again in 2019.

8. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The date and time of the next meeting was:

Thursday, 28 March 2019 at 6.00pm in Committee Room 'C' – Duke of Lancaster Room, Count Hall, Preston, PR1 8RJ.