

Lancashire County Council

Corporate Parenting Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 26th September, 2018 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 Julie Gibson	- Lancashire County Council
Catherine	- representing Adoption
Amanda Hatton	- Director of Children's Services, LCC
Graham Nelson	- representing Fostering Forum
Michelle	- LINX Representative
Kris	- LINX Representative
Paige	- LINX Representative
Natasha	- LINX Representative
Bobby	- LINX Representative
Kaci	- LINX Representative
Sam	- LINX Representative
Iqra	- LINX Representative

Co-opted members

Caroline Waldron	- Safeguarding and Looked After Children, East Lancs CCG and BwD CCG
Amanda Mansfield	- Independent Reviewing Officers
Lorraine Moody	- Barnardo's
Lynda Pearson	- Leaving Care, LCC
Dylan Williams	- Barnardo's
Stephen Young	- Corporate Management Team, Lancashire County Council
Rebecca King	- Barnardo's
Michelle Dawon	- Barnardo's

Other Attendees

John Readman	- Executive Director of Education and Children's Services, LCC
Karen Buckley	- Aurora Care Young People's Services Limited
Jane Hylton	- Leaving Care, LCC
Barbara Bath	- Fostering, Adoption, Residential and YOT Team, LCC

Gavin Redhead	- Participation Lead, LCC
Reece Hobin	- Apprentice - LCC
Sam Gorton	- Democratic Services, LCC
Peter Knowles	- Children's Social Care, LCC
Ralph Rushworth	- Apprentice - LCC

1. Introductions and Apologies

All were welcomed to the meeting and apologies were received and noted from County Councillors Andrew Gardiner, Phillippa Williamson and Stephen Clarke, Michelle Davies, Nicola Bamford, Roxanne McAllister, Kirsty Clarke and Tracey Ellmore.

Stephen Young, Executive Director of Growth, Environment, Transport and Community Services was welcomed to his first meeting.

Gavin Redhead, Strategy Lead for Participation (Young People) was also welcomed to his first meeting. Gavin had recently taken over from Hannah Peake and looked forward to working alongside the young people of Lancashire.

2. Notes of the Meetings and Matters Arising from 22 May 2018 and 26 July 2018

The minutes from the previous meetings held on 22 May 2018 and 26 July 2018 were agreed as a correct record and there were no matters arising from them.

3. LINX Activity

LINX presented the attached PowerPoint quiz to the Board to highlight the importance of physical and mental health and well-being of children in care and care leavers.

Following the activity, group work ensued with each table being asked how they felt the following individuals/groups could help children looked after and care leavers:

Friend
Corporate Parenting Board
Social Worker
Health Professional
Carers

Feedback from each group is attached.

4. What our Elected Members have been doing

County Councillor Ian Brown informed the Board that the issue with keys was still ongoing and discussions were continuing.

Work around the setting up home allowance for care leavers and looking at other organisations where care leavers could spend their allowance was also ongoing.

Following the meeting where Mark Ormerod reported on what he would change if he was Director of Children's Services, John Readman informed the Board that he would feed back at a future meeting on what could and could not be achieved. Some of the work had formed part of the Corporate Parenting Strategy and highlighting the Staying Put policy had also taken place.

5. Ofsted Update

Amanda Hatton gave an update on the outcome of the recent Ofsted Inspection and reported that services had got much better however, there was still a long way to go. Ofsted looked at all services that dealt with children looked after and care leavers and stated that social workers knew the children well and cared for them and that the social workers were not moving around which was good for the young people. Currently within Lancashire there was the most experienced social workers there has been which was also good. Funding right placements had improved as well. Leaving Care Services had seen an improvement and young people had been listened to. The Corporate Parenting Strategy had been developed and an action plan would be created going forward.

Educational attainments were getting better and Audrey Swann had visited schools to talk to them. Two young people recently received firsts at University, however this was not consistently good and as corporate parents we needed to encourage our care leavers to undertake further education.

We needed to be more consistent as their corporate parent and we have not quite delivered that yet. A pledge was being developed to support young people going forward and this would be discussed later on the agenda.

Ofsted did praise the young people they spoke to, saying they were very impressed with them as well as the Department for Education who said they were the best young people they had worked with.

6. Corporate Parenting Strategy including the Pledge

Peter Knowles, Children's Social Care Central Team Manager updated the Board on the Corporate Parenting Strategy and the pledge. A meeting was also being held with the Corporate Management Team on 27 September to deliver the strategy and promote the Local Offer and request that services support it.

The strategy still needed a few tweaks before it was presented to Cabinet. There would be one version of the strategy that everybody understood and delivered.

LINX were asked to provide the introduction and give feedback on the strategy as soon as possible.

A draft pledge had been circulated with the agenda and LINX again were asked to consider it and feedback their comments on it. Comments from the Board were:

- that they felt it was too wordy and that mental health needed referencing on it under the Healthy and Active title
- ensure it as available in different languages, formats ie large text, braille

Lancashire County Council would be signing up to the pledge therefore it had to be fit for purpose and have an impact. Peter Knowles, Jane Hylton and Gavin Redhead agreed to work with LINX on finalising the pledge. The action plan and strategy would back the pledge up. It was anticipated that the pledge would be launched at the end of November.

Actions:

- i) LINX to write an introduction for the strategy and feedback to Peter Knowles on the content.
- ii) LINX to comment on the pledge and finalise it with Jane Hylton, Peter Knowles and Gavin Redhead.

7. Care Leaver Local Offer

Jane Hylton, Assistant Base Manager, Children's Social Care Central gave an update on the Local Offer and reported that it was due to go live during Care Leaver week in October.

Feedback on the Local Offer and how it had got to where it currently was, is detailed in the PowerPoint presentation attached. The Local Offer website would be regularly updated as services come on-board. There had been lots of improvements made to the website and there would also be an events section, so care leavers knew when and where events were taking place. All information would be in one place for care leavers and this would also include national guidance/information required by law but mostly local areas which were relevant to our young people. There would also be a link to the website from the Care Leavers Facebook page. It was confirmed that the website works on all mobile devices.

There was still ongoing interest in providing a Lancashire card for care leavers, which would give them discount on public transport, museums etc. Stephen Young agreed to speak with Jane Hylton on this suggestion outside of the meeting.

Offers would appear on the website and where and how those offers could be accessed ie leisure centres that were offering free passes for three months and then offer access after this at a significantly reduced rate.

Caroline Waldron, Safeguarding and Looked After Children, East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group and Blackburn with Darwen Clinical Commissioning Group informed the Board that there was an exemption for care leavers on prescription costs. An HC1 SC form needed to be completed and this

was something that needed to be available on the website. Caroline agreed to forward the form to Anna Howarth who would ensure that Jane Hylton was in receipt of it to be included on the website. This exemption did not include dental fees, however this was something that Caroline would take back to her service to discuss further.

If anybody had any offers/schemes/information for young people, please use the Local Offer email address and a member of the team would be in touch – careleaverlo@lancashire.gov.UK.

When the website went live, it was vital to ensure that foster carers, residential homes were aware of it and carers/staff use it as a resource.

One of the young people queried whether a credits scheme could be applied within Lancashire County Council for young people who volunteered and then their credits could be exchanged. Chorley Borough Council run a Local Exchange Scheme and young people felt this would be good for them here in Lancashire.

- Actions:**
- i) Stephen Young, Executive Director of Growth, Environment, Transport and Community Services to liaise with Jane Hylton on the idea of a Lancashire card for care leavers.
 - ii) Caroline Waldron to forward the HC1 SC form to Anna Howarth, who will liaise with Jane Hylton re putting this on the local offer website.
 - iii) Caroline Waldron will speak with NHS Services with regards to dental costs being exempt/reduced for care leavers.

8. Young People's Benchmarking Forum

Following the last meeting Ralph Rushworth presented to the Board four questions that had been raised at the Young People's Benchmarking Forum and representatives agreed to take these back to their Authorities and get their views.

Ralph shared his experience about how he tried to access his own records and what information was on Lancashire County Council's website. Details are attached in the PowerPoint and Ralph's experience as below:

The extract is from an A-Z guide I found for care leavers, this A-Z guide is made by the council, what you see is all it stated about files. The fact this screenshot says at the bottom of the extract proves that this document is severely out of date and it is still easily found/accessed with in our local authorities - we need to stop feeding our service users wrong information and communicate more effectively than we have been. We need to change.

The hyperlink is a genuine Lancashire County Council page to educate service users and the public on accessing files. Clicking into it there is a lack of information actually around file access - there is also a hyperlink to submit an online form to access files - this is broken - takes you to an error 404. I emailed

the email on the page about information and no reply. This shows LCC are not up-to-date with the general information they are advertising and seems that if this information already isn't accurate surely the deeper into LCC it goes the less information is going to be known/accurate. I contacted someone in document management service who gave me another point of contact but still nobody could give me a definite answer.

My Personal Adviser had put the form in to access my file when I started my apprenticeship in April 2018. I had still heard nothing back from her about it or the document management service (which is initially where I assume the files are stored and sent off to the young person's home address).

No numbers to contact to track the progress of the files. I contacted duty on 0300 1236720 they ended up trying to put me through to my social worker who I sit in the same office with, so after 20 min on hold it was for nothing.

My Personal Adviser gave me the form they send to the PO box and there was a number on the bottom to contact for the form in different languages or formats – 01772534285, I rang this number several times and it would say the number is no longer in service. Majority of Personal Advisers I asked hadn't done it before so there clearly wasn't education because no one could tell me what happens after you send off to request the files. Once I got into contact with someone who helps extract the data they told me they had sent the letter for proof of id (proof of id is needed to access your files and you send as a separate document the majority of the time.) to the wrong flat but also to the next door address which could be damaging to my life if he had sent the files there.

How we could improve

REMEMBER EVEN IF WE FIX THE PROCESS WE NEED A SAFETY NET OF SUPPORT

Training such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder awareness, resilience coaching, peer mentoring, counselling – maybe make it mandatory, an available choice if you want to access your records, you receive them with a counsellor/therapist and they read it with you then you are free to leave and take the records but more sessions with the counsellor can be available if you would like them?

Even if we fix the process then we need to remember that reading your files can be extremely damaging to a young person's mental health, I have experienced first-hand my friend's mental health spiralling from receiving his files, simply because there was so much of his life he did not know and he did not have the right tools to cope with the impact this had on his life, but as a positive he is thriving in his life now and aiming to access Higher Education.

Following Ralph's account of his experience the Board agreed that:

- Actions:**
- i) Training needs to be improved.
 - ii) Progress needs to be tracked.
 - iii) Understanding what risks are in place and how they are managed.
 - iv) John Readman agreed to raise all of the above with Heads of Service and would feedback at a future meeting on progress.

Ralph was thanked for sharing his experience and bringing this issue to the Board's attention.

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

What LINX have been doing

LINX presented the attached PowerPoint to the Board on all the activities they had been involved with since the last meeting in July 2018.

Young Inspectors

The attached PowerPoint was presented and there were no issues arising from it.

Become Charity for Children in Care and Young Care Leavers

Sam, LINX member and also a member of the Become Charity for Children in Care and Young Care Leavers gave an overview of the group. They met eight times a year in London and had been in existence since 1985. Young care leavers from around the Country came together and worked to improve the everyday lives and future life chances of young people who were unable to live with their birth families. Work included giving evidence to parliamentary committees, lobbying on legislation and writing and sharing briefings about specific issues with parliamentarians, as well as supporting care experienced young people to share their views and experiences, either in person or in other ways.

A magazine was also produced and further information could be found on the Become [website](#).

Sam was thanked for his presentation.

10. Any Other Business

There were no other items of business received.

11. Date and Time of Future Meetings

Dates and times of future meetings were confirmed as follows:

Tuesday, 27 November 2018 at 6.00pm in Committee Room 'C' – Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston.

Wednesday, 23 January 2019 at 6.00pm in Committee Room 'C' – Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston

Thursday, 28 March 2019 at 6.00pm in Committee Room 'C' – Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston

Wednesday, 22 May 2019 at 6.00pm in Committee Room 'D' – Henry Bolingbroke Room, County Hall, Preston

12. Performance Report

This item was for information.