

## Lancashire County Council

### Corporate Parenting Board

#### Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 13th January, 2022 at 6.00 pm in Zoom Virtual Meeting

**Present: Members**

County Councillor Stephen Clarke	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Ash Sutcliffe	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Jeff Couperthwaite	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Andrea Kay	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Rupert Swarbrick	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Julie Gibson	- Lancashire County Council
Liz Donnelly Nelson	- Adoption
Mary	- LINX Representative
Georgia	- LINX Representative
Emma	- LINX Representative
Chloe	- LINX Representative

**Co-opted members**

Caroline Waldron	- East Lancashire CCG
Audrey Swann	- Vulnerable and Looked After Children, LCC
Andreas Feldhaar	- Permanence Service, LCC
Janice Laing	- Permanence Service, LCC
Moya McKinney	- Permanence Service - Leaving Care, LCC
Gina Power	- Permanence Service - Children in Our Care, LCC
Paul McIntyre	- Fostering, Adoption Lancashire & Blackpool and Residential Services, LCC
Catherine Brooks	- Child and Family Wellbeing Service, LCC
Brian Wood	- Child and Family Wellbeing Service, LCC
Adam Riley	- Child and Family Wellbeing Service
April Rankin	- Child and Family Wellbeing Service
Jennifer Donnelly	- Lancs 0-19, Virgin Care Ltd

**Other Attendees**

County Councillor Cosima Towneley	- Lancashire County Council
Barbara Bath	- Children's Services, LCC

Brendan Lee	- Permanence Service, LCC
Tonya Harrison	- Permanence Service, LCC
Sam Gorton	- Democratic Services, LCC

## 1. Introductions and Apologies

All were welcomed to the meeting and apologies were received from County Councillor Scott Smith, Graham Lindley, Julie Dawkins, Nicola Bamford, Stephen Young, Neil Drummond and Jo Swords.

Caroline Waldron was attending on behalf of Kirsty Byrne and Helen Hargreaves, Clinical Commissioning Groups.

## 2. Notes of the Meeting and Matters Arising from 24 November 2021

**Resolved:** That the minutes were agreed as an accurate record and there were no matters arising from them.

## 3. Lasting Homes Panel

Janice Laing and Tonya Harrison, Permanence Service, Lancashire County Council provided a brief overview on the Lasting Homes Panel, setting out key expectations and principles around the function and purpose of the new Panel which has replaced the Permanence Panel as the process for ratifying a child's home as permanent. The purpose of this item was to share awareness with the Board and its' corporate parenting partners of what is being done now, what was done previously and for the Board to ratify that the Protocol can be progressed.

The Lasting Home Panel Protocol [document](#) that was shared with the agenda, prior to the meeting is intended as a guide for social workers and managers. It will help define the pathways for inclusion of children and young people and their carers in Lancashire children's permanence process and make clear the decision-making points and roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders. The document also, provided further details on the:

- Role of Lasting Home Panel
- Scope of Panel
- Difference between Permanence Panel and the new Lasting Home Panel
- Membership and Governance
- Roles and Responsibilities of the Children in our Care Service

A [presentation](#) was also given to the Board on the 'Lasting Home' Permanence Panel Redesign and this was attached to the agenda. This detailed further information on:

- Project Aim: Evaluate the Current Permanence Panel
- Our Journey of Consultation
- 'Lasting Home' Panel Redesign

- Lasting Home Panel Process
- Lasting Home Panel Children's Guide
- Lasting Home Panel Teens Guide
- The Complete Package

Following the presentation, the Board raised the following questions/points:

It was noted that one of the areas, on the Teens Guide around considering Post 18 accommodation options, is links in to one of the key priorities of the Corporate Parenting Board, "Improving sufficiency and providing the right homes in the right places at the right time" and that County Councillors Gibson and Kay were leading on and they felt it would be useful to link in with the officers involved with the Lasting Homes Panel to ensure that the process is as seamless as possible and that the young people feel completely involved in that journey and the importance of a forever home for the young people.

It was highlighted that the partners involved in both the Permanence Panel and the new Lasting Homes Panel, felt that the new panel was a lot clearer, and they felt that they had more of a role and can contribute to something that is more positive and the involvement of the young people is key to this.

The role of the Corporate Parenting Board in this process is to challenge the Panel on a regular basis on indicators such as how many plans have been ratified throughout the process, how is the process going and feedback on how it is linking in with the four key priorities of the Board.

**Resolved:** That the Corporate Parenting Board ratified the process of the Lasting Homes Panel (page 50 of the agenda pack) and agreed to scrutinise its' performance and receive feedback at timely intervals.

#### **4. Participation Team Update**

Georgia, Mary, Chloe and Emma from LINX (Lancashire's Children in Care Council), April Ranking and Adam Riley, Child and Family Wellbeing Service, Lancashire County Council provided the Board with an update from the Care Leavers Forum. The young people gave an update on what the Forum will be focusing on over the next few months. Further details can be found in the presentation which is attached to these minutes on:

- Our agenda
- Education

It was noted that the Forum would like to:

- Look at education and how it can be more supportive to children and young people
- Continue to be involved with fostering and adoption and continue to work with the interview panels.

- Focus on how to find and secure a job and would like more help and support with writing a CV and developing interview skills.
- Get more mental health support in Lancashire that is easily accessible and good quality as the waiting lists for mental health support can be extensive.
- For meetings, such as Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings and Children Looked After (CLA) meetings to not interfere with lessons, as this takes valuable time away from their education.
- Have more support and discussions about finance skills and how young people need to be supported with them. Young people need more of an understanding and support around the importance of saving money and how this can affect a person's finances.

One of the young people presenting at this Board was also attending the Education and Children Services Committee on 18 January 2022 representing children in care.

Young people have recently had a meeting with Fostering and Adoption to ensure that more youth voices are used in the marketing for this service. Young people will be involved in updating panel questions for new foster carers, working on updating marketing materials and social media as well as supporting the service in making videos for training purposes and sharing young people's stories.

Following work on interview panels, young people shared that it had built their confidence, by asking questions of the interviewees and that they had also given feedback too and helped to shape the questions for different job roles. They have also learnt what the different roles are and do and know that they are having their voices and opinions heard which makes a difference by influencing the service. They also shared that by taking part in the interview process, it enabled them to meet new people and also hear other's views and opinions. Young people also felt able to share both positives and improvements for the interviews which ensures that the processes are kept updated and gives the opportunity to make new links and networks by meeting senior staff members and other staff members from different services within the Council, which then gives them a more in-depth knowledge of how the Council works.

Young people would also like to look at a project similar to the Ask Angela Campaign to ensure children in care and care leavers feel safe in their communities, as well as looking at mental health support for children, young people and care leavers with other Apps that can be used by adults. They are also working with staff and services to arrange visits for the Young Inspectors programme and again this will further develop skills in being able to advice services on any improvements that come from the staff and young people.

The young people were thanked for their presentation and following it, the following points/issues were raised:

- There is a now a Mental Health Working Group who are looking for volunteers from LINX to be involved and to share their journeys with the Group so that they can understand a young person's experience in order to put pressure on the Group to draw up a plan which would then come to a future Corporate Parenting Board meeting. Young people agreed to be involved.
- With regards to Education, it was requested as to whether the young people presenting would be willing to liaise with officers from the Virtual School Team around the young people's voice in Education. Again, young people welcomed this invite to be involved.
- County Councillor Couperthwaite commented that at a meeting of the priority group he is involved with "Improving education, employment and training opportunities and outcomes" and how help can be given to our young people, that he would offer support on financial upskilling, CV writing skills and interview skills to support our young people and also what businesses would want from the young people. County Councillor Cosima Towneley, Cabinet Member for Children and Families also offered to support young people also if they required any help with interview skills/job applications.
- Young people were thanked for all their contributions to the services across the Council.
- From a health perspective it was noted that young people were asking for further support with mental health. Across Health as a system, they are currently looking to consult with young people, so Health can get a better understanding, shape and commission services going forward. A survey has been sent to the young people to complete. It is also hoped that there will be some consultation live events taking place and would like young people from LINX to be involved with those.
- It was also noted that the point raised by young people around Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings and other meetings taking place during school hours, would be picked up and raised with the Service.

**Resolved:** That the Corporate Parenting Board:

- i) Noted the young people's update from the Care Leaver Forum.
- ii) April Rankin/Adam Riley, Child and Family Wellbeing Service will link in with the Mental Health Working Group and Virtual School's Team to enable young people to have their voices heard within these areas as requested by officers on the Board.
- iii) Brendan Lee, Children in Care and Care Leavers Service, Lancashire County Council would raise the point made by young people around not wanting Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings and other meetings to take place during school hours, and that he would raise this with the Service.

## **5. Update from the Four Corporate Parenting Board Priority Groups**

Andreas Feldhaar, Permanence Service, Lancashire County Council provided a verbal update to the Board on the four priority groups which are:

- i) Achieving permanence.
- ii) Improved sufficiency providing the right homes at the right places at the right time.
- iii) Improving physical, social, emotional and mental health support and outcomes.
- iv) Improving education, employment and training opportunities and outcomes.

Following, the last Board meeting in November 2021 where elected members agreed to be champions for the four priority groups, initial meetings with three out of the four priority groups have taken place which gave an opportunity to have an in-depth conversation of the specific subject each member was involved with.

### **Improved sufficiency providing the right homes at the right places at the right time" – Champions County Councillors Kay and Gibson**

The Board were informed that the proposal for this priority is for Children in our Care (CIOC) to link in with the Commissioning Team and Fostering Service, to look at the demand and opportunities in the context of the Sufficiency Strategy. With regards to Care Leavers, the intention is to provide some political support by setting up a Corporate Parents meeting with Senior Officers and Directors from the District Housing Authorities in April 2022 and the focus will be to:

- i) Look at the allocations and provisions of homes for Care Leavers and to hold the Authorities accountable in their corporate parenting roles.
- ii) Look at the strategic development of the housing stock in their districts to meet the needs of Lancashire's Care Leavers in the future.

It was noted for that meeting with the District Housing Authorities, the views of young people will be required and to have them present at the meeting.

### **Improving physical, social, emotional and mental health support and outcomes – Champions County Councillors Sutcliffe and Swarbrick**

The first task for this group from the Permanence Service will be to map out the service provision across Lancashire, for physical, social, emotional and mental health at the different tiers and levels and will link in with partners, to get the information together, starting with the more complexed provisions and then filtering down for the more preventative provisions at District levels and linking in with the current review of the mental health provisions that are currently commissioned from within the Permanence Service, to get an understanding of what the outcomes are and how far it has progressed, where the gaps and challenges are. Political support will be used to strengthen the partnership working to make services accessible and ensure the quality of support provided.

## **Improving education, employment and training opportunities and outcomes – Champions County Councillors Couperthwaite and Smith**

Whilst there is already a lot of information and data with regards to education, employment and training (EET) of Children Looked After and Care Leavers, it is proposed to link back in with the Virtual School and to have a more in-depth understanding about how children and young people move through the key stages, what outcomes there are and to look at their intended destinations and compare that with national data. The main purpose of this priority is to match potential offers with the needs of the young people and look at political support to get employment and training opportunities available and ensure focus is in the right areas which are aligned to the needs of the young people. There is also an intention to link in with the Employment Support Services at Lancashire County Council to look at what employability support can be offered and also to support the Taster days for young people in care and care leavers.

It was noted that follow up meetings will take place with all the priority groups within the next 4-6 weeks.

Following the update a number of questions/points were raised:

- It was proposed that a piece of work would be developed for employers, to give them some sort of analysis and summary of the needs of the young people both in terms of the Taster days, short term and longer term employment.
- It was requested that for the next meeting, there would be a written report on what each priority group plans to cover, the actions and the outcomes that are wanted by the Board.
- There also needs to be a focus on the Taster days and continue to work to the time scales on these.
- It was noted that for the first time, in a long time, the education, employment and training figures are over 50% which is commendable progression and work to further improve this figure is ongoing.
- Preparation for young people and also the employer is key and is something that needs to be looked at across the whole cohort.
- A 16 week employability programme has commenced over the last 12 months and is delivered internally by the Employment Support Team who are also grateful for offers of support from colleagues.
- Funding from the Local Authority to support people up to 25 years of age by the Employment Support Team is a unique opportunity in Lancashire.
- It was noted that County Councillors Kay and Gibson wish to speak with young people and find out what they think their needs are with regards to accommodation for the priority group they are involved in and to work with the Leaders from the Housing Authorities on improving services offered to young people in their Districts.
- There was an aspiration that each County Councillor could unearth one opportunity/firm/business that could support a young person to give them a chance.

- Work needs to be happening with younger children in secondary schools also, so when they become a Care Leaver, they already have the support, ability and are equipped to enter into further education and/or employment.
- Each secondary school in the Authority has a named Employment Support Officer for Lancashire Children Looked After and visit schools from Year 9 and support is given around interviews, CVs, employment, further education etc and it is felt that this is the reason why in 2021 there was 95% of young people with a positive destination when leaving school. Work is continuing and it is starting to have an impact, which is good news.

- Resolved:**
- i) That the Board noted the update from the four priority groups.
  - ii) That a written report on what each priority group plans to cover, the actions and the outcomes that are wanted by the Board, will be presented to the next Board meeting.

## **6. Life Story Work**

Janice Laing, Permanence Service, Lancashire County Council presented the Life Story work to the Board and provided a brief overview of the work. The Board were also presented with the revised policy and procedure. It was requested that the Board ratify the Life Story Work Revised Policy and Procedures to enable them to be rolled out across the County.

The Board received a presentation (attached to the minutes) which provided further details on:

- Reviewing Life Story Work
- What is Life Story Work
- Core Elements of Life Story Work
- Revised Policy and Procedure

The Board went into breakout rooms to consider the following questions:

- Q1: What do they think a non-Looked After child in a 'typical' home might need to understand their life story?
- Q2: What do they think our Looked After children and Care Experienced young people need to understand their life story?

In the breakout rooms the Board were also asked to note that as part of implementing the revised policy, a Launch Event was being planned, that aims to inspire and motivate the workforce, and were asked to discuss this also in their groups, for views and ideas on the Launch Event, so this can be achieved.

Following the discussions in the breakout rooms, feedback was received, and further details of this feedback can be found in the document attached to the minutes.



County Councillor Swarbrick offered to seek some funding for the launch event.

The Board also noted that a copy of the Life Story book was kept, either in hard copy format or electronic format.

Young people also commented that they would like to be involved in the Launch Event.

**Resolved:** The Board agreed to ratify and sign off of Life Story Work Policy and Procedure.

## **7. Any Other Business**

A request was made to the Board with regards to Looked After Children and Leaving Care Team Managers and Social Workers (particularly in the Looked After Teams) observing the Board, so they have insight as to what is being discussed and agreed.

**Resolved:** That the Board agreed that observers from the Looked After Children and Leaving Care Teams can attend the Board.

## **8. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Tuesday, 15 March 2022 at 6pm, format to be confirmed.