

Lancashire County Council

Corporate Parenting Board

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 15th March, 2022 at 6.00 pm in
Savoy Suite 1 - The Exchange - County Hall, Preston**

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 Scott Smith	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Rupert Swarbrick	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Julie Gibson	- Lancashire County Council
Georgia	- LINX Representative
Jake	- LINX Representative
Mary	- LINX Representative
Emma	- LINX Representative

Co-opted members

Julie Dawkins	- Fostering Providers
Andreas Feldhaar	- Permanence Service, LCC
Janice Laing	- Permanence Service, 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
Neil Drummond	- Lancashire Constabulary PPU
Adam Riley	- Child and Family Wellbeing Service, LCC
April Rankin	- Child and Family Wellbeing Service, LCC
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

Sam Gorton	- Democratic Services, LCC
Jane Hylton	- Looked After Children and Leaving Care Service, LCC
Ralph Rushworth	- Looked After Children and Leaving Care Service, LCC
Saskia	- Care Experienced Young Person
Chris Coyle	- Front Door, Assessment and Adolescent Services, LCC

1. Introductions and Apologies

All were welcomed to the meeting and apologies were received from Liz Donnelly Nelson, Graham Lindley, Kirsty Byrne, Caroline Waldron, Audrey Swann, Stephen Young, Brian Wood and Maureen Huddleston.

It was noted that Jenny Donnelly was attending on behalf of Rebecca McGeown, Lancashire 0-19, Virgin Care Ltd.

2. Notes of the Meeting and Matters Arising from 13 January 2022

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

3. Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-2026, Draft Promise and Objectives

Andreas Feldhaar, Permanence Service, Lancashire County Council presented the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-2026, Draft Promise and Objectives and reiterated the importance of the role of a Corporate Parent.

The Board were asked to work in groups to discuss what they thought a good Corporate Parent should be and the characteristics they felt were really important to have. The Board were reminded of the Corporate Parenting Principles which is legislation and states what is important when acting as a Corporate Parent (details of the principles, can be found documented in the presentation attached). Following the discussion, feedback was given from each of the groups and a copy of the responses is provided in the minutes. A summary of some of the responses were:

- Support, think and plan for our young people
- Children are the centre of thinking
- Caring
- Physical, emotional and wellbeing
- Aspirations for our young people
- Engaging
- Holistic understanding of care experienced young people
- Life skills
- Helping young people on the journey, when moving into independence

The Corporate Parenting Principles apply to Corporate Parents and are a statutory duty that have to be fulfilled. The Corporate Parenting role applies to any employee of Lancashire County Council including Elected Members and the principles are non-negotiable if you are in that role and does not matter whether you work directly with care experienced young people or not. The legislation also identifies relevant partners ie health, education, police and criminal justice. The principles do not apply to those relevant partners as a statutory duty, however relevant partners should be open to those principles and Corporate Parents, should encourage them to follow the principles. It is also the responsibility of a Corporate Parent to encourage services and businesses in the community, to commit to those principles and apply them in their actions, to enable a growing corporate family for young people.

The Board carried out another exercise to review the revised Corporate Parenting Promise that had been originally created with young people in 2018. The promise was built on the Corporate Parenting Principles and what it means to Board members and ensure, that in their role, colleagues' roles within their services, can commit and keep to the promise. It was noted that this would be followed up in the coming weeks. Feedback from the groups on their promise to young people, were shared with Board members and a copy of the comments are attached to the minutes.

The current Corporate Parenting Strategy runs from 2018-2022 and has been in the process of being reviewed since June 2021. The Board were presented with the [draft amendments](#) that had been made to that strategy and these had been circulated with the agenda. The eight new objectives reflected the four Corporate Parenting priorities, and the Board were asked to review the proposed objectives to ensure they reflected the four priorities and that they were the right objectives for the Board for the next four years. It was noted that the young people had also reviewed the strategy and provided their feedback too.

A query was raised as to how the objectives would be measured and how often this would be done. It was noted that there was a series of briefings taking place currently with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board with all Heads of Service across Children's Social Care. There would also be a Head of Service presenting their area of work to the Board at each meeting as well as the Performance Data report for Children's Services. This will enable the Board to scrutinise and monitor the data as well as the individual Priority Groups who will also be presented with data pertinent to the priority they are leading on.

Resolved: That the Draft Promise and objectives for the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-2026 be agreed.

4. Update from the Four Corporate Parenting Board Priority Groups

Andreas Feldhaar, Permanence Service, Lancashire County Council gave an update on the four Corporate Parenting Board Priority Groups and the progress that has been made so far:

- i) Achieving Permanence – Aim is to promote the importance of permanence across the corporate family.

Progress so far was that County Councillor Stephen Clarke (and County Councillor Ash Sutcliffe) had met with Paul McIntyre, Head of Service for Fostering, Adoption and Residential, Mandy Williams, Head of Service for Family Safeguarding. A review of the Corporate Parenting Board membership had also taken place.

Next steps were, that meetings have been arranged for County Councillors Clarke and Sutcliffe with the Head of Service for Safeguarding, Inspection and Audit (16 March 2022), Head of Service for Front Door, Assessment and Adolescent Services (FAAS) on 22 March 2022 and that a meeting would also be arranged with the Service Managers of Permanence and Children in our Care.

- ii) Improving sufficiency to provide the right home at the right place – Aim is currently to improve access to lasting homes for young people leaving care by holding a county meeting with district councils and selected registered providers.

Progress so far was that contact details had been confirmed, an agenda had been confirmed and the date set, and venue booked.

The next steps are for invites to be sent out on 18 March 2022, planning meetings to be held on 30 March 2022 and 27 April 2022 with the meeting for Lasting Homes for Lancashire's Care Leavers, County Meeting with district councils and selected registered providers taking place on 4 May 2022.

It was also noted that it was the first time in over two years that the Housing Policy was no longer in a draft format and that it had been circulated to the districts, accompanied by a letter signed by County Councillors Kay and Gibson. County Councillor Gibson also reiterated that as part of this priority group they were keen to ensure that the voice of the young people was heard and that they were involved in the County meeting. It was confirmed that this would be in the form of a video from young people who wished to express their requirements on their future homes.

- iii) Improving social, physical, emotional and mental health support and outcomes – Aim is to support the escalation process to access emotional and mental health support.

Progress so far was to explore referral pathways and provisions across Lancashire, identifying complexity of emotional wellbeing and mental health provisions for young people in care and leaving care.

Next steps were for officers to identify the escalation process and feedback issues at its next priority group meeting which would be held in April/May 2022.

It was noted that Caroline Waldron had requested that one of the Board meetings be health focused and interactive.

It was also confirmed that the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) provision was available up to the age of 19 years now.

In terms of mental health support waiting lists and remaining on these if young people move house, is something that is being looked at in the Health Service. Support is available up to 18 years of age currently, however it was felt that this should be 25 years of age to allow support to continue when a young person is transitioning into their own accommodation and moving from Children's Services to Adult Services and may not have the support of their family and prevent them from having to join a different waiting list, to access Adult Services mental health support. Further issues were also raised in terms of dental support and optical support for care leavers and that this was something that the Corporate Parenting Leads and Senior Officer Leads for this priority should look further into.

- iv) Improving education, employment and training opportunities and outcomes – Aim is to promote local employment opportunities for young people.

Progress so far was that the Education, Employment and training (EET) background information had been explored and the Corporate Parents' EET Support process with the Employment Support Team had been considered.

Next steps were to facilitate a briefing session for newly elected members/corporate parents and to launch the Corporate Parents' Education, Employment and Training Support process as well as Taster Days for young people.

Resolved: That the Board noted the update from the four priority groups.

5. Front Door, Assessment and Adolescent Services

Chris Coyle, Front Door Assessment and Adolescent Services (FAAS), Lancashire County Council provided an overview of the service to the Board. A presentation had been circulated with the agenda where further information can be found.

The Board were informed that Corporate Parenting was not something that happens in one part of Children's Services, it should start at the "Front Door". It was noted that there are approximately 8,000-10,000 requests for support a year via the "Front Door" in Lancashire, which is people asking for support in all sorts of different areas. From those requests, approximately 2,000-3,000, convert to a child/family requiring a social work assessment. There is a real focus that is driven by the Leadership Team within Lancashire County Council to make sure that children and families are treated in the same way and that there are high regards to care and high levels of aspirations for those children and families who are requesting support.

The Board were informed that a Peer Review had recently been undertaken by Manchester City Council on the Front Door Service around the culture and language and reported that there was some really good collaborative work with colleagues from the Police and Health etc, however it was raised that the language used around children and families could be better and this will now be developed across all Children's Services in Lancashire.

The Board were informed that social care assessments are carried out by the Duty Assessment Teams who are based across Lancashire and their aim is to work 'with' children and families, not 'at', to look at what support is best for them and how their needs can be best met, either within Children's Social Care or with a partner agency. The Authority is developing a "warm hands approach" in how children and families are warmly handed over to those who are best placed to support them.

Another area of work is around Adolescent Services of which there are two elements:

- i) Child and Youth Justice Services (formerly Youth Offending Team), again, language has been changed as the former name had implications that youths offended, and discussions had been held with young people currently in that service, around renaming it from the Youth Offending Team and they chose the new service title of Child and Youth Justice.

The aim of the service is to prevent and divert young people from being known to the service in the first place. If young people do end up being known to the service, then it is how they are supported and ensure they are not repeat contacts. The In Care and Out of Trouble workstream, that has been set up in Lancashire following Lord Laming's review of children looked after within the Youth Justice Services has seen significant progress since its' introduction, in terms of reducing the number of children that have come into contact with the service.

- ii) Contextual Safeguarding Teams included the Exploitation Team who support children at risk of criminal and/or sexual exploitation or with issues around modern slavery and the Extra Familial Harm Team who support children where the risks or issues are not linked to how they are supported by their parents, eg mental health issues.

It was noted that from the Peer Review, that within the Exploitation Team, positive work highlighted which was being done across the partnership in respect of children that are subject to sexual exploitation, and it was commented that there was a consistently high and impactful intervention with those children. It was also reported that the service was not as developed in terms of children who are at risk of criminal exploitation, and this is an area which is being developed and there is constant thinking about the approach around that.

In terms of the Extra Familial Harm Team, this is a new team, where constant learning and developing happens on a daily basis, on how best to support the children who are often those with the most complexed needs and issues and whose parents are doing everything they can to keep the child safe, however, for whatever reason, there are still significant issues with that child, ie mental health issues, emotional and behavioural issues, Autistic Spectrum Conditions or other elements that means support to them has to be really tailored and individualised. It was also reported that Covid has changed the dynamic around young people and how they express their response to the level of issues that they face and that this has changed dramatically since the pandemic.

Resolved: That the Board noted the update received on the Front Door, Assessment and Adolescent Service (FAAS).

6. Participation Team Update

Young people from LINX (Lancashire's Children in Care Council) and April Rankin and Adam Riley, Participation Team, Child and Family Wellbeing Service, Lancashire County Council presented to the Board a piece of work on what makes a good social worker.

The Board were requested to participate in an activity using Mentimeter and to answer the following question:

What do you think makes a good social worker?

The results were presented to the Board in the form of a word cloud and is attached to the minutes.

The young people then presented to the Board what they felt made a good social worker and again the responses can be found in the presentation attached to the minutes, with the following responses being highlighted:

Engaging – young people felt that this was important to them as it can help create a bond with their social worker and to help build trust. The felt that engaging and fun are also important to when planning to have meetings outside as this gets them out of the house.

They also felt that being honest with was important as social workers make decisions about their future and young people would like to know the truth about things - the good and the bad.

Other words that stood out from the results from the question asked of young people what they thought made a good social worker was:

- Understanding
- Inclusive
- Consistent
- Caring
- Non-judgmental
- Reliable

The young people then spoke about how the topic of transition between workers could be approached, how to effectively implement a positive transition and gave them ideas for the future. Young people felt that:

- If a new worker was being introduced to them, eg a social worker or a personal advisor, they should be mindful to inform the young people of this change at an appropriate time.
- This could be in either an informal or formal setting, dependent on the relationship and the young people, however it was felt that getting the setting right, could affect how the young people are feeling before they are told and if they are already anxious in the environment, news of getting a new worker could make them more anxious and upset.
- Giving children and young people enough notice of the transition was also important so they did not feel like they had not been taken into consideration and that this would make them feel valued and able to feel prepared.
- A good guide for the time frame is 4 to 8 weeks, ensuring that in this period of time young people get the chance to meet and get to know both their new worker. There has also been positive feedback that it helps young people, if both the new and old worker are there when we meet young people.
- An idea that young people proposed would be to share with them a 'pen profile' of workers so young people could read about them on paper before they meet in person.
- Another idea was that if a worker was to change, the young person could be given a few profiles to look at and see who they felt would be best get on with to support transition and handle situations.

Young people had also discussed how they could make being a social worker appealing to new recruits. They felt that:

- Lancashire County Council Children's Services staff could attend career events at high schools/colleges to give young people at an earlier age when choosing their options, an insight into what jobs are available and what qualifications they will need.
- Attend universities to share current jobs available within the service.

- Use social media to share videos developed from young people on Instagram, Facebook and Tiktok.
- Share videos of a 'Day in the life of a social worker' and other workers so people get to see the real day to day role of different jobs.
- Videos from young people about why social workers are important to them to help promote the work that is being done.
- Using real people on adverts to reinforce 'real people real impact'.

The Board were then asked to use the slider on Mentimeter to let the young people know if the information they had shared with the Board was new and useful to members and also how they felt the level of importance was for the following areas:

- Knowing what makes a good social worker
- Knowing information about a positive transition
- Using social media
- Attending career/job events

The results for both questions are shown in the presentation attached to the minutes.

Resolved: That the young people were thanked for their item and that a link will be made with Georgine Lee, Lancashire Family Safeguarding Transformation, Lancashire County Council re young people getting involved with social worker recruitment.

7. Any Other Business

FYP (For You Page) Newsletter

Ralph Rushworth introduced the FYP (For You Page) Newsletter which is written by care experienced young people (aged 14-25), for care experienced young people, it is encouraged that professionals who work with those young people also sign up to promote it and share the link with other care experienced young people. The newsletter will be published every two weeks, and the first edition went live on 14 March 2022.

The editorial group need 100 care experienced young people between the ages of 14 and 25 to subscribe to the newsletter for 6 months and as an incentive, the first young people who subscribe and evaluate every newsletter, a one-off payment will be made of £25.

Resolved: That members of the Board were encouraged to sign up to the newsletter and to share the link within their teams/services with both professionals and care experienced young people. The link to register for the newsletter is: <http://eepurl.com/hVC2nT>.

8. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday, 11 May 2022 at 6pm in Savoy Suite 2, The Exchange, County Hall, Preston, PR1 8RJ.