

Lancashire County Council

Corporate Parenting Board

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 22 November, 2023 at 6.00pm
in Savoy Suite 2 - The Exchange, County Hall, Preston, PR1 8XJ**

Present: Members

County Councillor Stephen Clarke	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Anna Hindle	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Ron Woollam	- Lancashire County Council
David Russo	- Fostering Forum
Katy Hodkinson	- Fostering Forum
Mary	- LINX/CLF Representative
Emma	- LINX/CLF Representative
Ripley	- LINX/CLF Representative/Participation Team, LCC
Horateo	- LINX/CLF Representative
Saskia	- LINX/CLF Representative

Co-opted members

Charlotte Iddon	- Education Improvement Service, LCC
Janice Laing	- Permanence Service, LCC
Moya McKinney	- Permanence Service, LCC
Gina Power	- Permanence Service, LCC
Amanda Barbour	- Fostering, Adoption Lancashire Blackpool, and Residential Services, LCC
Catherine Brooks	- Child and Family Wellbeing Service, LCC
Neil Drummond	- Lancashire Constabulary PPU
Brian Wood	- Child and Family Wellbeing Service, LCC
April Pollitt	- Child and Family Wellbeing Service
Caroline Waldron	- Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board
Jennifer Donnelly	- Lancs 0-19, HCRG
Bev Maymond	- Fostering Provider

Other Attendees

Natalie Williams	- Permanence Service, LCC
Jennifer Robertshaw	- Permanence Service, LCC
Brendan Lee	- Permanence Service, LCC
Kirsty Clarke	- National Youth Advocacy Service
Roxanne McAllister	- Permanence Service, LCC
Jane Hylton	- Permanence Service, LCC

Aaron Walmsley- Fishwick	- Permanence Service, LCC
Clare Smith	- Policy, Commissioning and Children's Health, LCC
Sam Gorton	- Democratic Services, LCC
Sumaiya	- Observer

1. Icebreaker

Young people from Lancashire's Children in Care Council (LINX) and Care Leavers Forum (CLF) opened the meeting with an icebreaker. Congratulations to the winner – Katy Hodkinson, Fostering Forum.

2. Introductions and Apologies

All were welcomed to the meeting and apologies were received from County Councillor Andrea Kay, County Councillor Loraine Cox, Andreas Feldhaar, Alex Wood, Hayley Kinowski, Andy Smith, Clare Platt, Adam Riley and Maureen Huddleston.

The Board were informed that County Councillor Loraine Cox had been appointed as Deputy Chair of the Board replacing County Councillor Ash Sutcliffe. County Councillor Sutcliffe was thanked for his contribution to the Board during his time as Deputy Chair.

Replacements for the meeting were as follows:

- County Councillor Anna Hindle for County Councillor Julie Gibson, Lancashire County Council.
- Charlotte Iddon for Audrey Swann, Education Improvement Service, Lancashire County Council.

3. Notes of the Meeting and Matters Arising from 19 September 2023

Resolved: That the minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

The Board noted that the revised Terms of Reference were agreed at Cabinet on 2 November 2023 following the inclusion of the additional responsibility of the Board to oversee the County Council's adoption and implementation of the Care Leavers' Covenant 'whole Council approach'. In presenting the report, the Cabinet thanked the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board, County Councillor Stephen Clarke, and all the members across the county council for the work they had done, as well as all the external partners who contributed to the work of the Board, and the young people who attended to share their experiences.

Brendan Lee, Permanence Service, Lancashire County Council also provided an update on the protected characteristics and Care Leavers Covenant to the Board. Cabinet had agreed the Care Leavers Covenant – Whole Council Approach at its' meeting on 6 July 2023 and had been presented at various

Executive and Senior Management meetings. The challenge for the Corporate Parenting Board is that every member of the Board as well as every service in the local authority, will be required to sign a pledge on what they can offer to Care Leavers in Lancashire. The next step is for care leavers and the Head of Permanence Service, Lancashire County Council to present to the Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Directors and Heads of Service across the Council and to ask them to make a pledge, which will be measured by key performance indicators and monitored by the Corporate Parenting Board. Discussions on the next steps for the Board on how this will progress, will be presented at the next Corporate Parenting Board meeting in January 2024.

Resolved: That the Board agreed to have further discussions on the implementation, monitoring and key performance indicators against the pledges for the Care Leaver Covenant, at the next meeting in January 2024.

4. Participation Team Update

Young people from LINX (Lancashire's Children in Care Council) and the Care Leavers Forum (CLF) shared feedback and an update from the Care Leavers Week Reality Paypoint "In our shoes" activity. Young people thanked the few members that had taken part in the challenge, however commented on their disappointment that the majority of the Board had not taken up the challenge and asked if there was anything that the young people could have done differently to encourage more adults to participate. Young people stated that the response had made them feel flat when they had created the challenge with passion and enthusiasm and were excited to see the results and how people approached it. The Board noted some extracts from the challenge and the young people felt that those that had taken part had got something out of it and it had made them think about what care leavers have and limit unnecessary spending. There was also thought around if other unexpected expenditures occurred, such as social or leisure activities or being able to travel to appointments, interviews etc how this would impact a care leavers budget.

The Board congratulated Ripley on their appointment as an Assistant Youth Support Worker in the Participation Team, for the Council, who would be supporting SEND Forum and the Care Leavers Forum centrally. There are still two other vacancies (North and East) currently being advertised.

The young people had also linked into the Permanence Service Update (Item 7) where they had pulled together some action points from the Youth Takeover meeting and created some smarter targets to be focused on with regards to:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Lasting Homes
- Education, Employment and Training

The young people requested that any progress that had been made within these areas, be relayed back to them and where any support can be offered, to also let

them know. Young people will then consider which they will be more actively involved in and work to develop the ones they feel most passionate about and will choose one or two points to focus on initially. There will be further discussion on this at Item 7.

Young people have also been focussing and planning for the presentation to the Executive Leadership Team on the protected characteristics motion that had been raised at Full Council earlier in the year. The presentation will be as follows:

- Icebreaker – Personal and Professional Profile
- Protected Characteristics Overview
- Care Leaver Covenant Overview
- Making it Real
- Table Discussions – making the Motion a reality

Resolved: The Board noted the young people's feedback and presentation.

5. National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) Annual Report

Kirsty Clarke, National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) presented the Annual Report for the National Youth Advocacy Service and Independent Visitor Service (IVS), which was circulated with the [agenda](#) and included the following:

- Introduction
- Referrals (Breakdown by district/type/outcomes/signposting)
- Awareness Raising
- Partnership Working
- Participation of Children and Young People
- Covid 19 and Adapting to New Ways of Working
- Successes
- National Youth Advocacy Service celebrated National Volunteer Week
- Campaigning
- Key Challenges
- Development Areas and Priorities for 2022/2023
- What do Children, Young People and Families say?
- What do Referrers say?

The Board were provided with an overview of what an Advocate and Independent Visitor does which is:

Advocates

They are independent from professionals and listen to what young people want, inform them of their rights and empower them to get their voice heard. An advocate ensures wishes and feelings are expressed and acted upon to improve a young person's situation and work just for them and are on their side.

Independent Visitors

Supports, listens and advises young people up to the age of 19 and are volunteers who are recruited, monitored and trained and act as buddies/mentors and are matched to one young person. A minimum commitment of two years is required and meets the young person at least once a month.

The Board received a presentation (attached to the agenda) which provided an annual overview 2022/2023 with further information on:

Advocacy

- Advocacy Referrals 2022/2023
- Advocacy Support
- Feedback

Independent Visitors

- Feedback

The Board noted that there were currently 18 Lancashire young people on the waiting list for an Independent Visitor and the following request was made:

Priorities and Request to Corporate Parenting Board

A significant priority for the service is to explore innovative recruitment processes as recruitment to the Independent Visitor Service is challenging. The National Youth Advocacy Service has comprehensively promoted opportunities to volunteer. However, the National Youth Advocacy Services involvement with other local authorities and the National Independent Visitor Network shows this to be a national issue post COVID pandemic with significantly less applications.

Members of the Corporate Parenting Board were asked to assist with sharing and promoting the volunteer independent visitor opportunity (for young people aged 5 years of age and up to their 19th birthday) and were provided with leaflets to distribute across family, friends, work colleagues etc. An Independent Visitor can work for Lancashire County Council, as long as there is no conflict of interest. Care experienced young people should also be encouraged to apply and will receive training for the role. Criteria for the role is very broad and further information can be found in the leaflets and on the website www.nyas.net.

Resolved: That the Corporate Parenting Board:

- i) Commented and received the report.
- ii) Considered the suggestions made within the Annual Report (attached at Appendix 'A' of the report on the [agenda](#)) regarding the necessity to recruit more Independent Visitor Volunteers through Lancashire County Council which could be achieved through the Lancashire Volunteer Partnership.

- iii) Requested that a further update in six months be provided to the Corporate Parenting Board.

6. Family Hubs

Catherine Brooks, Children and Family Wellbeing Service, Lancashire County Council provided the Board with an update on the launch of the Family Hubs and the work that is going on in that area. The Board received a presentation (appended to the minutes) which had further information on:

- Lancashire Family Hub Networks
- A Family Hubs way of working together across Early Help Partnerships in Lancashire
- The Components of Each District Family Hub Networks
- Progress to Date
- Launching Network Ambitions with the First Group of Family Hubs
- Co-Located Delivery of Services at the First Family Hubs from After Launch
- Next Steps

The Board were informed that there are six core services that feature in the delivery plan for an enhanced/integrated programme of delivery at Family Hubs which is in line with the national specification. The services are:

- Early help/safeguarding children
- Infant feeding
- Midwifery
- Health visiting
- SEND Support
- Mental Health

After the presentation, the following points were raised:

- The opening hours are currently during the day, weekdays, although some Targeted Youth Support Service work from some of the hubs, as well as some having a Youth Zone attached with evening groups operating. Some groups are being piloted on Saturday mornings as well. Within the core offer there is a 15% variability in order to respond to local need.
- Care experienced young people over the age of 19 with a disability can attend the hub and access the information on offer, or be signposted if their needs cannot be met, however the SEND offer is up to 25 years of age.
- Conversations have been taking place internally with regards to Care Leaver Hubs and how these are integrated and be available over the weekends as well.
- There are also Special Guardianship Order (SGO) groups being run and there are talks with Adoption and Fostering teams about what they can access. However, the hubs are for anybody, parents, carers, families, young people to access the services on offer within the hubs.
- Discussion needs to take place in terms of different services offering the same training/parenting classes, to ensure there is no duplication.

Resolved: That the Board noted the update.

7. Permanence Service Performance Update

Gina Power, Permanence Service, Lancashire County Council and Young People from LINX (Lancashire's Children in Care Council) and the Care Leavers Forum (CLF) introduced a performance data workshop activity for the Board on three areas which children and young people felt are important to them to achieve excellent outcomes. The three areas are:

Health – dental checks, health assessments and passports, strengths and difficulties questionnaire.

Permanence – where children live, lasting homes and education, employment and training.

Practice – visits, reviews, assessments and life story work.

Each group was given the outline of a person and data for that particular area and asked to look at the data and then answer the following questions:

What do we know?

Building strong foundations – what is missing?

Who do we need to help?

Young people outlined that these discussions are really important, as they are going to use the information provided to finish writing up the plan from the Youth Takeover Day meeting that took place in July 2023. Feedback from the groups would be received from each area following discussions.

Health Feedback

- The term Health Passport, following a survey with young people, stated that they wanted this to be referred to as a Health Summary.
- There are effective reports from certain districts, however that is not consistent across all districts, so there is a priority for Moya McKinney and Caroline Waldron and relevant health partners to meet urgently in order to discuss a minimum of a consistent offer, undertake further surveys with young people around the quality of that particular feedback going forwards and to work with the database LCS Champions in order to ensure it is configured in order for officers to see at a glance, how many young people have health summaries, how many are happy with it and how many young people may want it reviewed, have any particular areas of health that are concerning.
- There are two issues that need resolving in that, this needs to be right for the future, and retrospectively, any that have been missed to ensure young people are given a health summary.
- This is a priority and was part of the recent Ofsted Inspection report and there needs to be a timescale against pulling together a plan for this.
- In terms of Dentists, they need to take some responsibility as well as the young person in getting to a Dentist.

- Young people who are not in education and training through illness or pregnancy and parenting - do Health Visitors have a role in providing more targeted intensive support, which Jenny Donnelly will feedback to her service.

Permanence Feedback

- In terms of the House Project, Cohort 2 are now in the middle of the learning program and there has been an offer of 10 properties currently from registered social landlords.
- Project 2 is still in negotiation with regards to which districts will offer properties.
- The COVID pandemic impacted on young people in that half of Lancashire's young people who leave care are not in education, training or employment and the majority of young people who are not accessing education, employment or training would have been in Year 11 during the pandemic.
- There has been a lot of targeted support and effort in this area to try to improve and that it is felt that it would have been a lot worse if this support was not already in place.
- In terms of the Personal Education Plan (PEP) data, it was felt that this did not really give much information, therefore more quality information is needed around the support and the engagement of young people prior to leaving care and that PEP data needs to be broken down into different categories.
- In terms of help around education, employment and training, the opportunities that the Covenant will bring and will be offered within the Council, will be varied and wide ranging.
- The Employment Support Team provides support from the age of 12, with careers guidance and as young people get older, that work that has been carried out since the age of 12 will come into fruition.
- There is lots of work happening around NEET such as job fairs and work within teams and the data needs to be more accurate.
- In-House Residential Services in Lancashire are undergoing expansion and are creating new homes for children and is part of the Service Plan for Staying Close and there is still lots of work to do around this.

Practice Feedback

- This group looked at the performance data as part of the practice area and the performance data on the table is what was given to Ofsted and is statutory.
- Help is needed from everybody all of the time young people feel, to enable them to meet their needs.
- There is a need to celebrate good data also.

Resolved: That the Groups completed the plan as requested by young people in order for them to complete their plan from the Young People Takeover Day in July 2023.

8. Care Leaver Week

Jane Hylton and Aaron Walmsley-Fishwick, Permanence Service, Lancashire County Council gave a brief overview of Care Leaver Week which took place in October 2023.

The Board were informed, that again, the week had been a success ending with the celebration event and was well attended.

The Board noted that there had also been a challenge in that care leavers wanted to have a display in County Hall of what happening throughout the week and wanted the "Wall of Fame" which recognised their achievements throughout the year to be displayed. Sadly, they were not able to do this and felt that as Corporate Parents, this is something that the Authority should display, and highlight to their Corporate Parents what they have achieved and to those visiting those buildings too.

At the celebration evening, there was also a thumb print tree for those attending and a competition as to what the tree should be called. It was named "The Party Tree" as it depicted the coming together of care leavers, family, friends and staff on the evening to celebrate their successes. It was then suggested that the "Party Tree" as well as the "Wall of Fame" be displayed in Lancashire County Council Buildings and the Chair of the Board agreed, that on behalf of the Board he would write a letter to Facilities Management to offer the support of the Board for this.

Another suggestion was that the "Wall of Fame" should also be displayed on staff notices.

Resolved: That the Corporate Parenting Board:

- i) Agreed that the Chair on behalf of the Board write a letter of support to Facilities Management requesting that the "Party Tree" and the "Wall of Fame" be displayed across LCC Buildings where possible.
- ii) That Jane Hylton, enquire as to having the "Wall of Fame" advertised on Staff Notices for all staff to see.

9. Any Other Business

There was not any other urgent business.

10. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday, 10 January 2024 at 6pm in the Savoy Suite, The Exchange, County Hall, Preston, PR1 8RJ.