

**Report to the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools**  
**Report submitted by: Head of Service - Safeguarding, Inspection and Audit**  
**Date: 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015**

**Part I**

Electoral Divisions affected:  
All

**Children Looked After Strategy 2014- 2017**  
**Leaving Care Strategy 2014- 2017**  
(Appendices 'A' to 'C' refer)

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**Executive Summary**

The Children Looked After Strategy and Leaving Care Strategy have been revised as the previous strategies have ended. In addition, there has been a plethora of new Government legislation which drives progress in this area. The Children and Young People's Plan has also been recently revised so it is an opportune time to look at how the strategies can be improved and refreshed. Significant changes are also being experienced within the organisation, including the introduction of the Sufficiency Strategy which directly impacts on the success of both the Children Looked After and the Leaving Care Strategies.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and Standing Order 25 has been complied with.

**Recommendation**

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools is recommended to approve:

- (i) The Children Looked After Strategy 2014-2017, as set out at Appendix 'A';  
and
- (ii) The Leaving Care Strategy 2014-2017, as set out at Appendix 'B'.

**Background and Advice**

It is considered both timely and sensible to revise both the Children Looked After (CLA) Strategy 2014-2017 and the Leaving Care Strategy 2014-2017. Children's Social Care provision is changing and the number of Children Looked After is high. It is necessary that the Authority, in its role as Corporate Parent, continues to commit to improving outcomes for children and young people who are looked after or leaving care. Together, with the Children and Young People's Plan and the Sufficiency Strategy, our intentions to improving outcomes are clear and outcome focused.

## **Children Looked After (CLA) Strategy**

The strategy will demonstrate what actions need to be taken to ensure that outcomes for children and young people who are looked after are improved, and that they can go on to lead happy, independent and successful lives.

Lancashire County Council has already made a Pledge to these children and young people. The Pledge has been developed in partnership with children and young people who are looked after, and forms the basis of how the Corporate Parenting Board oversees how we fulfil our responsibilities as a Corporate Parent. The Children Looked After Strategy and associated Action Plan will highlight our priorities and how we will achieve them.

The revised Children Looked After Strategy 2014-2017 is set out at Appendix 'A'.

The Children Looked After Strategic Action Plan 2014-2017 is set out at Appendix Ai.

Information on Protected Characteristics, Children and Families Act 2014 and Children Looked After and Youth Justice is set out at Appendix Aii.

## **Leaving Care Strategy**

The strategy demonstrates how services within Lancashire County Council will work together to ensure that young people leaving Local Authority Care are ready and feel confident to make the move into independent or semi-independent living. The Leaving Care Strategy sets out how we will improve outcomes for care leavers, including how we will support them beyond 18, if required. The Leaving Care Strategy accompanies the CLA Strategy and the Sufficiency Strategy. Both provide detailed information on the range of support available to children and young people leaving care, in addition to specific topics such as accommodation and Pathway Planning.

Actions have been identified within the Leaving Care Strategy and progress will be monitored and reviewed by the Children's Social Care Senior Management Team, LINX (Children in Care Council) and the Corporate Parenting Board. The same Governance arrangements will also be in place for the Children Looked After Strategy.

The revised Leaving Care Strategy 2014-2017 is set out at Appendix 'B'.

The Leaving Care Guide aimed at young people moving into independent and semi independent living is set out at Appendix Bi.

## **Consultations**

Consultation has been carried out with children and young people who are currently looked after or who are leaving care. The consultation was undertaken with members of LINX (Children in Care Council), supported by Barnardos. Children's Social Care Managers were also consulted regularly to ensure that the strategy incorporated the needs of the new service.

**Implications:**

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

**Risk management**

The Strategy has been agreed by DELT and an Equality Analysis has been completed, set out at Appendix 'C'.

**List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
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N/A

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A