

Lancashire County Council

Corporate Parenting Board

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 28th April, 2016 at 6.00 pm in
Cabinet Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston**

Present: Members

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| County Councillor Sue Pryn | - Lancashire County Council |
| County Councillor Lorraine Beavers | - Lancashire County Council |
| County Councillor Margaret Brindle | - Lancashire County Council |
| County Councillor Ian Brown | - Lancashire County Council |
| County Councillor Julie Gibson | - Lancashire County Council |
| Catherine | - representing Adoption |
| Tony Morrissey | - Deputy Director, Children's Services |
| Bradley | - LINX Representative |
| Mark | - LINX Representative |
| Sam | - LINX Representative |
| Beth | - LINX Representative |
| Kristal | - LINX Representative |
| Mary-Beth | - LINX Representative |
| Bethany | - LINX Representative |
| Meghan | - LINX Representative |

Co-opted members

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Debbie Ross | - Designated Nurse for CLA, representing CCG |
| Mia Whitbread | - Barnardos |
| Audrey Swann | - Headteacher, Vulnerable and Looked After Children |
| Susan Towers | - Agency Residential |
| Cheryl Lovell | - Agency Fostering |
| Michelle Dawson | - Barnardos |
| Annette McNeil | - Policy, Information and Commissioning Service |

Other Attendees

| | |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Kirsty Clarke | - Lancashire Children's Rights Society |
| Sam Gorton (Clerk) | - Democratic Services, LCC |
| Georgine Lee | - Senior Manager, Fostering and Adoption |
| Linda Clegg | - Director for Children's Services |

1. Introductions and Apologies

All were welcomed to the meeting and apologies were received and noted from County Councillor (CC) Lord, CC Snape, Jane Simpson, Lynsey Evans, Mark Twiname, Nicola Bamford, Diane Booth, Amanda Mansfield and Angela Epps.

County Councillor Beavers attended the meeting from 6.50pm.

One of the young people, had taken part in a sponsored head shave for the Teenage Cancer Trust and members were asked if they would like to sponsor him.

2. Notes of the Meeting and Matters Arising from 4 February 2016

The notes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

3. CLA Attainments

Audrey Swann spoke to the presentation as attached.

A study has been done recently on the Educational Progress of Looked After Children in England: Linking Care and Educational Data. Audrey presented a summary of the key messages from the report attached. A full report can also be found [here](#).

Catherine asked that with the changes in SATs this year, how confident was the Authority that the improvements would be maintained. Audrey indicated that they would expect to see a drop in attainment, just like last year when the GCSE's changed, however, there were other measures carried out to ensure the changes were not significant. Audrey reiterated that it was important to measure progress of children looked after (CLA) and ensure that the pupil premium was being used effectively.

CC Prynn noted that the research that had been carried out was very important since it highlighted educational attainment differentials between Children in Need (CIN) and Children in Care, illustrating how attainment increased for the latter group. This was a positive message demonstrating how taking a Child In Need into care can improve their educational outcomes.

4. What our Elected Members have been doing

CC Prynn

CC Prynn reported that she had been carrying out work on policies for CLA especially around care leavers. Currently there is no policy on what the Authority offers care leavers and what they are guaranteed to receive when they leave care, therefore this is resulting in inconsistencies across this area. CC Prynn is looking to set up a Task and Finish Group to devise a policy which will set out

information on what is offered. Guidance on the Leaving Care Grant needs to be included in the policy, so that young people in secure settings, have access to the grant when they leave that setting. CC Prynne invited Elected Members of the Board to be on the Task and Finish Group.

Action: Elected Members to email CC Prynne if they wish to be on the Task and Finish Group.

At Full Council on 25 February 2016, CC Prynne submitted a notice of motion for this Council to call on the Government to amend the Children and Families Act 2014 to enable all children in residential care to stay under the care of the Local Authority until 21 years of age. It was agreed that, as this Motion had received unanimous, cross-party support, the letter to be sent by the Chief Executive to the Secretary of State would be signed by each of the political group leaders. A letter has now been sent to Edward Timpson, Minister of State for Children and Families at Department for Education.

A complaint had been received from a young person at Bowerham Road Residential Unit. The associated complaint investigation report is still outstanding however actions have been undertaken and the young person concerned appears to be happy with the outcome when asked about this at a recent event. As a result of such actions, CC Prynne has requested information from officers on relevant legislation and government guidance to clarify the position of 16/17 year olds who are placed in supported accommodation from residential homes by staff.

CC Prynne attended a Safeguarding Conference in Manchester and discussed with a lead member of the LGA opportunities for aiding the work of the CPB through possible workshops and consultancy.

Thanks were also expressed to all involved with the PROUD awards including the young people and the success it was on the evening.

CC Brindle

CC Brindle attended the PROUD awards which were held on 4 March 2016 as Chairman of the County Council. She reported on what a fantastic evening it had been and the achievements of the young people who won awards were phenomenal. CC Brindle thanked all the young people who had attended the awards.

It was also noted that CC Brindle had attended a number of events organised by the sea and army cadets and encouraged the young people to look at joining these groups.

CC Gibson

CC Gibson is Lead Member for Community Safety, and they are currently looking at the Hate Crime Strategy. Lancashire Police are taking this forward and working with partners. A copy of the strategy is attached. If anybody has any

comments on this, they can email CC Gibson direct at julie.gibson@lancashire.gov.uk.

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

What LINX Have Been Doing

LINX took the Board through everything they had been doing since the last meeting. Please see powerpoint attached.

150th Anniversary of Barnardos

A [video](#) was shown which included some members of LINX which is marking Barnardos 150th anniversary and invited everybody to a Summer Fayre on 11 June 2016. The invite is attached and the Board were asked to share this amongst colleagues.

CPB Performance Report

Next, LINX gave feedback on the Performance Report which is attached. Questions that were raised on the powerpoint will be addressed when Diane Booth goes to visit LINX at their meeting.

The fixed term exclusion target of 70, was felt by the young people an unacceptable target and wanted this lowering.

Action: Tony Morrissey agreed to discuss this with Audrey Swann and endeavour to reduce to the target.

Catherine raised an issue around there currently being more perspective adopters than there were children. Georgine Lee stated that there were a number of older children, sibling groups and children with disabilities awaiting adoption and there is work being carried out with the Government Adoption Vision to address this. There are currently no Adoption Activity Days planned, however with the new Adoption Recruitment Strategy, the Adoption Service are looking at planning more Activity Days and also looking at Adopters Activity Days. This will be a joined up approach with Blackburn with Darwen and Cumbria and will do further work around this together. CC Prynne requested that Board be kept informed when these dates are planned.

Young Inspectors Report

The Board noted the Young Inspectors report as attached and feedback from these visits, especially the revisits were that young people at the establishments welcomed the Young Inspectors back and that they were following up the recommendations to ensure they had been fulfilled. It was requested that for the next meeting a more detailed report be provided ie a case study.

Action: LINX agreed to bring a more detailed report to the next meeting.

Debbie Ross commented that she had attended a National Safeguarding Steering Group where examples of good practice were requested. Debbie informed them of the Young Inspectors work and offered to share with them the LINX model. Health colleagues have also appreciated the feedback received on health assessments.

Kirsty Clarke invited the Young Inspectors to inspect Lancashire's Children's Rights Society and Advocacy Service where Lancashire have children/young people placed. The Young Inspectors welcomed this invite.

Activity

Two County Councillors became care leavers for this activity and put on blindfolds and were asked to make their way to the back of the room which was their road to finding supported accommodation. The rest of the Board stood in their way holding up obstacles as they tried to reach their destination. A sample of comments that care leavers had raised with regards getting supported accommodation were as follows:

- Lonely
- Isolated
- No pathway plan
- Not seeing social worker regularly enough
- Feeling too young to live independently
- Lack of information on college bursaries
- No finances in place
- Low paid apprenticeships
- Mental health concerns

The activity was to highlight what barriers care leavers faced around supported accommodation.

Cheryl Lovell commented that Fostering Solutions used this activity also in their initial foster carer training to highlight to them what issues Care Leavers face.

Action: to explore the above issues in the Care Leavers Task Group.

Care Leavers Strategy

Mark has recently experienced a number of difficulties as a Care Leaver eg:

- finding out what he is entitled to
- issues with Leaving Care worker not having correct information on Staying Put Policy and then going on leave and no other contact given
- top-up not being paid from Lancashire County Council (LCC)
- Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) not knowing what a CLA was
- Income support issues

The Board recognised that this was totally unacceptable and wondered just how often this was happening. When Leaving Care Workers go on leave or off sick, there needs to be contingency plans in place to cover this. Work with Care Leavers needs to be happening months before they turn 18 and not on their 18th birthday. Systems appear to be in place, but how robust are they?

Action: Tony Morrissey to speak with Mark outside of the meeting and follow the issues up.

Action With regards the training of Leaving Care Workers, Linda Clegg will address this and share some information on this in the next item.

The Board had recently worked with the DWP, however it appeared that this needed to be revisited.

CC Brindle agreed to contact the Housing Benefit Officer at Burnley Borough Council to find out how Care Leavers claimed housing benefit and would share this with the Board.

Kirsty Clarke stated that there had been a project piloted recently called Care to be Different run by their Advocacy Service where young people could contact them for support. Kirsty also commented that the issues that Mark had faced were common with lots of Care Leavers.

LINX were thanked for all their hard work.

6. Ofsted Recommendations

Update from Children's Service Improvement Board

Linda Clegg gave an update from the Children's Service Improvement Board which was attached.

The Improvement Board had met monthly since January 2016 and had an independent Chair. It was a multi-agency group which includes a Social Worker and young people and was responsible for providing support and challenge and overseeing progress.

There were two documents that the Improvement Board had adopted which were:

[The Practitioner's Guide](#)

Our Vision (as attached)

These documents were available to take away from this meeting.

Linda reported that from 9 May 2016 there would be specialist support given to Care Leavers and when this had been in place for a few months, would come

back to this meeting to give an update on how it was going. The specialist support would be a mixture of predominantly Personal Advisors and some Social Workers.

With regards the issues with LCS, and it providing real time data it was proving difficult to fix, however work continues on this but the Board were asked to note that it was not a quick fix. They were currently looking at seven areas and once they had been solved, they would move on to other areas.

CC Prynne asked where the CPB fits in with the scrutiny of these services and how it can link in with Post Inspection Improvement Board. Linda felt that the work the Board was undertaking around policies would be a useful piece of work to dovetail in.

Linda was thanked for her presentation.

Unfortunately, the presentation from Georgine Lee on Fostering and Adoption had to be deferred due to the meeting running over, and she agreed to come back to the next meeting to present her report.

The Action Plan was also not discussed.

7. Any Other Business

There was no urgent business received.

8. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday, 16 June 2016 at 6.00pm in the Duke of Lancaster Room (formerly Cabinet Room 'C').