

Lancashire County Council

Corporate Parenting Board

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 4th August, 2016 at 1.30 pm in
Cabinet Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston**

Present: Members

County Councillor Matthew Tomlinson	- Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools
County Councillor Lorraine Beavers	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Margaret Brindle	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Ian Brown	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Dorothy Lord	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Sue Prynn (Chair)	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Cynthia Dereli	- Lancashire County Council
Jane Simpson	- representing Foster Carers
Catherine	- representing Adoption
Paige	- LINX
Charlotte	- LINX
Sam R	- LINX
Bradley	- LINX
Sam W	- LINX

Co-opted members

Diane Booth	- Children's Social Care
Kate Baggaley	- Barnardos
Debbie Nolan-Plunkett	- Barnardos
Susan Towers	- Agency Residential

Other Attendees

Kirsty Clarke	- Lancashire Children's Rights Society
Sam Gorton (Clerk)	- Democratic Services, LCC
Reni Hall	- Barnardos
Kerry Haslam	- Barnardos
Anna Howarth	- Lancashire Care Foundation Trust
Colette Lawler	- Lancashire Care Foundation Trust
Thomas Redfearn	- Children's Rights Society
Kady	- POWAR

Evie	- POWAR
William	- POWAR
Kora	- POWAR
Courtney	- POWAR
Emma	- POWAR
Rosie	- POWAR
Matthew	- POWAR
Kirsten	- POWAR

1. Icebreaker

As this was a young person's meeting, the Chair for the meeting was Charlotte.

Charlotte welcomed POWAR (Lancashire County Council's participation group for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities) who joined LINX (Lancashire's Children in Care Council) to receive their Diana Award certificates and to feedback on some exciting collaborative work that has been going on in Lancashire.

Evie introduced the icebreaker, where the Board were asked to highlight their Country's identity, be it real or imaginary which encouraged people to think about the following qualities:

- Pulling together
- Every person in the team plays a crucial role
- Team leadership
- Discipline
- Motivation
- Talent
- Hard work
- Support and encouragement
- Trust
- Dealing with set backs
- Learning from the experts

Each group came up with imaginary countries and detailed their reasoning behind the names they had come up with.

The countries were as follows:

- Peaceful Island
- Gold Fogia
- Happy Winners
- Wonderland

2. What Have LINX Been Doing

Bradley then informed the Board on what LINX had been doing since the last Corporate Parenting Board meeting.

The powerpoint that Bradley designed is attached detailing all LINX' activities.

Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE)

Feedback on exciting work that the CRAE had been doing was given by William who has been part of the steering group called See it, Say it, Change it, since January 2015. Mark from the LINX group is also a member.

Last year they carried out research and worked on writing a report about how children's rights are not being respected in the UK. They covered issues such as standard of living, children in care, health and education. In October, they went to the United Nations in Geneva to present the report to the Committee on the rights of the child. Since then they have met with Edward Timpson, MP twice to discuss the recommendations which have made and has agreed to meet with the group twice a year.

This year they have been on two residentials. On the last one, they all voted on a particular issue to focus their campaign work on. They decided that the issue would be housing, as many children and families are being housed in poor and overcrowded accommodation. They will continue to meet up regularly to work on this issue and they are also going to be looking for ten more young people to join the group.

North West Regional Children in Care Conference

Charlotte informed the Board about the North West Regional Children in Care Conference which took place at County Hall in Preston on Saturday, 2 July 2016.

There were approximately sixty children and young people aged from 10 to 23 years.

They covered Children in Care Councils from Blackburn and Darwen, Blackpool, Bolton, Bury, Cumbria, Halton, Lancashire, Liverpool, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Wirral, and Wigan.

There were four workshops running on the day.

1. The Children's Commissioners' workshop called share and learn was to explore and draw out from the children and young people the questions that they hoped the Children in Care Council website page would address.
2. Lancashire ran a workshop explaining their campaign work around raising awareness of the pupil premium plus grants.
3. Trafford ran a workshop around the use of technology and social media.
4. Youth Focus North West ran a workshop around entitlements for care leavers.

The main themes that emerged from the children and young people were:

1. Wanting to know their rights and what they are entitled to at a national, local and individual level.
2. Better communication on their individual cases.
3. Understanding the care system as well as jargon and the language that can be used by professionals.

This was the first regional conference that the Children's Commissioner, Anne Longfield had attended. She stayed all day to answer individual questions and inform young people about her plans to help support Looked After Children and Care Leavers. She was interested in knowing the answers to the following questions:

- a) What is the best thing about being part of a children in care council?
- b) Why is it important to listen to children in care?
- c) What do you think about getting together today?

Answers included:

"Being part of a Children in Care Council gives me a voice to improve my own life and other children and young people's".

"I enjoy getting together with other children and young people in similar circumstances".

"It's important to listen to children in care because we are the experts in our own right as we experience what it is like every day".

"We feel more in control of own lives when listened to".

"Being part of a Children in Care Council helps to create a sense of citizenship and being part of a community. It feels good to be able to make things better for others in similar situations".

All the feedback from the day was very positive. The children and young people particularly liked hearing from each other and taking ideas back to their own Children in Care Councils.

The next North West Regional Children in Care Council is taking place in Knowsley in November. LINX are meeting up with Knowsley's Children in Care Council on the 18 August 2016 to help to plan this conference.

3. Council Tax and Care Leavers

County Councillor Prynne gave an update on what had happened since the last CPB meeting. A Notice of Motion had been presented at Full Council on 21 July 2016 and all Councillors were supportive of the motion for Council Tax Exemption

up to the age of 25 years for Care Leavers. A letter will now be sent to Central Government urging them to amend the Children and Social Work Bill that is currently being considered by Parliament to reflect this. Lancashire MPs will also be written to seeking their support to any such amendment to the Bill. Jo Turton, the Council's Chief Executive, will be asked to write to District Councils within the council to urge them to introduce a Council Tax Exemption for care leavers within their jurisdictions.

Thomas Redfearn from the Children's Society was welcomed to the meeting, and he gave some background on what he had been doing across the Country with regards Council Tax Exemption for Care Leavers. He gave feedback that the work of the CPB in Lancashire was in the top five Authorities in the Country which was very positive. Those Councils who have implemented Council Tax Exemption(or publicly stated they would) are:

- North Somerset
- Cheshire East
- Stockport
- Birmingham (have committed to implementing it from next April)

Thomas was very pleased that Lancashire had agreed to take it forward also.

The Board then split into groups to work on a paragraph to be inserted in the letter that young people would send to District Councils asking them to make Care Leavers exempt from Council Tax up to the age of 25. It was noted that District Councils should be reminded that they are also Corporate Parents too. Young people were also encouraged to write to their own District Councils individually as well.

LINX collected the suggestions and a final draft of the letter would be sent to CC Prynne and Thomas Redfearn for comments.

Action: LINX to send a copy of the final draft letter to CC Prynne and Thomas Redfearn for comments.

Thomas also said that there was a new Care Leavers Strategy called Keep on Caring which the Government have produced. It gives a detailed breakdown of what a Care Leaver should expect when leaving care. Some members of LINX influenced the strategy when they went down to Parliament.

Children's Society are also keen to do a lot more work around mental health and for CAMHS to include care leavers as a priority group.

Thomas was thanked for his attendance.

4. Young Inspectors

Sam R presented his young inspectors slideshow that he had designed on The Hawthorns Residential Unit. The presentation is attached. The Young Inspectors visited the Unit in October 2015 and then revisited it in May 2016.

Sam told the Board that being a young inspector requires you to have good skills of observation so that you can spot things that staff or young people may not be telling you. He then tested the Boards skills of observation by showing a short film and asking 10 questions on it afterwards.

The Board then split into two groups and a young inspector joined each of the groups where members of the Board asked them questions on their experiences of carrying out the visits and looked at some examples of the young inspectors' reports that they had carried out.

5. SEND Collaborative Workshop

Emma, Rosie and Evie from POWAR gave feedback from the SEND Together workshop which was held on 2 July 2016.

Links to the two films as shown at the meeting are below. The first was made before the first workshop in June to explain the purpose of the workshop and the second film was made after the workshop had taken place to inform young people and adults about what had taken place.

Film 1:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-tEIBCH4Pc&feature=youtu.be>

Film 2:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lj1bkjo0SKs>

In Lancashire, children, young people, parent carers and those who deliver services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, are starting their journey to work together.

On the 2nd June 2016 #Sendtogether launched this journey, a journey that is innovative, exciting and challenging - as it is a brand new way of working.

There are challenges on this journey and Lancashire know that they will not be able to give everyone all that they want, but they want to make a difference to the future of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in Lancashire.

At the first workshop the discussions and activities produced the following four steps needed for this journey to be successful.

1. **Engage** – this means involving everyone to develop services in the right place at the right time.

2. **Listen** – time must be spent listening to what people want so that services are not wasted on things that are not needed. We need to make sure everyone has an equal voice and is heard.
3. **Participate** – we need to work as a team and make sure collaboration is done equally with everyone involved.
4. **Co-produce** – by building on what we know and using people's energy, experience and knowledge to shape our services.

By everyone working together, children, young people and their families will get the right support at the right time. This will be achieved by looking at what services there are now and building on this to make a better future.

A new strategy will be implemented, but this will be challenging as there are limited resources.

#SENDtogether brings children and young people, parents and carers, to be involved in influencing plans for SEND services together - and the next steps are to invite along people from services that support young people with Education, Health and Care plans.

This will include the people who decide where the funding goes, those from the places and services that the young people use, and also those who they look up to inspire them.

Our four promises from the first day are that we will:

1. include everybody
2. spread the word in a range of ways
3. share success
4. use any lessons learnt

The next steps are:

Step one - The SEND together group is going to provide a voice for parents, carers and young people in influencing the plans for SEND during the coming year.

Step two – This new way of working will be evaluated after the next two workshops.

Step three – Young people's participation will be supported through POWAR.

Step four – The Lancashire Parent Carer Forum and their role in the workshop will be included going forward.

Step five - POWAR will present progress to Lancashire County Council senior officers and Councillors.

Step six – Ground rules will be adopted going forward.

The next workshop will be in November.

6. Diana Award

CC Tomlinson presented LINX and POWAR with their Diana Award which they had been nominated for. The inspection teams are made up of 15 inspirational young people who have collectively volunteered over a hundred hours of their time to carry out inspections.

Over the last three years the young inspectors have visited many Lancashire County Council (LCC) residential homes, private residential homes, LCC and private fostering agencies and other services for children and young people.

The Board congratulated the young people on this fantastic achievement.

7. Evaluation

Everybody was asked to fill in an evaluation form from the meeting on what they liked about the meeting and what they would like to see at the next meeting from young people?

The results are attached.

8. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday, 8 September 2016 at 6.00pm (refreshments served from 5.30pm) in the Duke of Lancaster Room (formerly Cabinet Room 'C'), County Hall, Preston, PR1 8RJ.