

Lancashire County Council

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 6th September, 2017 at 2.00 pm
in Cabinet Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston**

Present:

County Councillor Andrea Kay (Chair)

County Councillors

N Hennessy	A Gardiner
I Brown	D Howarth
A Cheetham	H Khan
J Cooney	D T Smith
B Dawson	M Tomlinson

Co-opted members

Alison Taylor, Children's Partnership Board - Fylde,
Wyre and Lancashire North
Councillor Stella Brunskill, Children's Partnership Board
- Hyndburn, Ribble Valley, Rossendale

County Councillor Bernard Dawson replaced County Councillor Loraine Cox for this meeting.

1. Apologies

No apologies were received.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None were disclosed.

3. Minutes from the meeting held on 26 July 2017

Resolved: That the minutes from the meeting held on the 26 July be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. Ofsted Monitoring Visit Update

The Chair welcomed Brendan Lee, Head of Children Social Care North, to the table.

In autumn 2015, Ofsted carried out an inspection of children's services in Lancashire. It focused on the experiences and progress of children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. It also included looking at the effectiveness of services and arrangements to help these children, including adoption and fostering.

A letter accompanying the report, summarised Ofsted's findings from the fifth monitoring visit since the local authority was judged inadequate in the autumn 2015. Members welcomed the letter and the support work being done by dedicated staff.

It was reported that there had been significant areas of progress but there were still some areas for improvement. A lot of consultation had taken place with other authorities who had gone through the process.

In relation to the information provided on the current issues around permanence, the Committee agreed that the process around assessment of need and evaluation of options required further work to ensure that the right placements were identified to meet the child's current and future needs.

It was noted that there were significant developments within the Fostering and Adoption Service to improve the process in relation to a more timely adoption of young children. Members requested a briefing and update on the work going on and a timeline on how long the work would take.

Resolved: That;

- i. The report be noted
- ii. A briefing note be circulated to members following the October monitoring visit

5. New SEND Service Pathway

The Chair welcomed David Graham, Head of Service Special Educational Needs and Disability, to the meeting. He presented a report on the new SEND Service Pathway.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Service was co-producing with parents, carers, children and young people and partner agencies a clear articulation of the support available for children, young people and adults in Lancashire with SEND from 0 to 25 years of age.

The legislative framework could be found within the Children and Families Act 2014 and detailed guidance within the SEND Code of Practice.

The reforms aimed to bring together local health services (clinical commissioning groups) and local authorities to integrate services across the 0-25 age range, and now included Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, intended for those with additional needs that could not be met solely through Special Educational Needs support plans provided by their educational establishment.

The Committee was informed that the population of children in Lancashire with complex needs was growing. Within the SEN Service there was a Portage Service available for 0 – 4 year olds with complex needs. The Portage Service was a home visiting service for pre-school children with significant special educational needs and disabilities. This Portage Service received the most compliments than all the other services within the SEN Service and was much appreciated by the children and parents.

It was stated that in Lancashire there were 27 posts for education psychologists but there were currently only 17 in post. This was due to a national shortage and it was noted that LCC was the first authority to pay for education psychology training places.

It was reported that LCC's Children with Disabilities Social Workers worked proactively with district councils. Where a child was severely disabled, the team would work directly with officers from the district council and occupational therapists around assessment to put together a package of support.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

6. School Nursing

A report was presented on school nursing. The Committee was informed that since 1 September 2014, school governing bodies were required to make arrangements to support pupils at school with medical conditions. The aim was to ensure that all children with medical conditions, in terms of both physical and mental health, were properly supported in school so that they can play a full and active role in school life, remain healthy and achieve their academic potential. Public Health Nursing provision through Lancashire County Council and Specialist School Nursing, which is a joint responsibility between CCG's and NHS England, provide additional support to schools in respect of this.

It was confirmed that there was no intent on removing or reducing school nursing. It was pointed out to members that all children with health care needs would have a health care plan whether in mainstream schools or special schools. This would be agreed with the medics, the family and the school. Where there was a need for specialist nursing, this nursing would be available via the Health Authority.

The Department for Education guidance (see below link) was clear that every school had a responsibility to maintain provision for children with medical needs.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions-3>

Resolved: That:

- i. The report be noted.
- ii. A request for establishing a task group be submitted to Internal Scrutiny Committee for approval on supporting pupils at school with medical conditions.

7. Children's Services Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2017/18

The work plan for the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee for the 2017/18 year was presented. The topics included were identified at the work planning workshop held on 21 June 2017.

Resolved: That the report and comments be noted.

8. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

9. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee will take place on Wednesday 18 October at 2:00pm in Cabinet Room C (The Duke of Lancaster Room) at the County Hall, Preston.

I Young
Director of Governance, Finance
and Public Services

County Hall
Preston