

Lancashire County Council

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 10th October, 2018 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	Ms S Malik
I Brown	J Mein
A Gardiner	D T Smith
J Rear	

Co-opted members

Councillor Stella Brunskill, Children's Partnership
Board - Hyndburn, Ribble Valley, Rossendale

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from County Councillor Anne Cheetham, County Councillor Paul V Greenall, Councillor Gail Goodman and Councillor Zara Khan.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None were disclosed.

3. Minutes from the meeting held on 4 July 2018

Resolved: That the minutes from the meeting held on the 4 July 2018 be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. Update from the Chair

The Chair provided an update to the committee following the discussions at the last meeting around the Lancashire Parent Carer Forum and the response received from Contact regarding the concerns raised by the committee.

The Chair had written to the regional manager of Contact and had correspondence back. LCC and Contact had agreed to work together to support the Parent Carers Group in achieving the best outcomes for the children of Lancashire.

5. Report on the Ofsted re-inspection of Children's Services

The Chair welcomed Sally Allen, Interim Director of Children's Services, to the meeting. The report presented provided an overview of the Ofsted re-inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers.

152 cases were looked at in total and 96 interviews had taken place. 3 areas of children's services in Lancashire required improvement to be good. These were:

- Children who need help and protection
- Children looked after and achieving performance – adoption performance was already good, but experiences and progress of care leavers required improvement.
- Leadership, management and governance

It was reported that appropriate actions had now been taken to improve services. There was improved visibility and communication from senior leaders which had given staff renewed confidence. The strength of Multi-Agency Strategic Partnerships was identified in the inspection. Regarding the progress of children who need help and protection, one of the main things that Ofsted fed back was that prompt, effective action was taken to safeguard children. There was a more joined up approach towards the critical aspects of safeguarding i.e. children missing from home and at risk of exploitation. The inspectors also noticed improvements in the strengths of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH).

Members were advised further work was required around the consistency of practice across children's services particularly around the quality of assessments and plans. On the experience and progress of care leavers Ofsted gave a confident view of LCC as a corporate parent.

The committee was informed that regarding Leadership, Management and Governance, there was evidence that this was increasingly effective. Leaders were acting on their responsibilities and priorities. The workforce strategy was effective resulting in a better balance between newly qualified social workers and experienced ones. There had to be a robust approach to workforce development. A more strength based approach to practice was being looked at and there was a risk sensible social work model in place.

It was reported that auditing had been identified as effective and provided an accurate evaluation of the quality of practice. Whilst data was increasingly accurate and well-presented there was more work to do in how managers used that data in terms of measuring progress.

It was recognised that the quality of pathway plans needed to be improved across the board, from children in need, child protection, children looked after and care leavers. This was a key element of Children's Services improvement.

From a discussion around how scrutiny could support Children's Services going forward, the following areas were identified:

- Progress of the improvement plan.
- Corporate Parenting Strategy and the local offer.
- A review of the Neglect Strategy.
- The impact of the Workforce Strategy.
- The Social Work Academy and the Leadership Academy.

Resolved: That;

- i. The report presented be noted.
- ii. An invite be extended to the Social Work Academy and Leadership Academy to attend the January meeting of the committee to provide an update to members on the progress made.

6. Child Health - Lancashire

The Chair welcomed Shaun Turner, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing; Clare Platt, Head of Service Health, Equity, Welfare and Partnerships; Karen Gosling, Senior Public Health Practitioner; and Judith Gault, Senior Manager Public Health and Wellbeing, to the meeting.

The report presented informed the committee that Public Health England (PHE) produced an annual Child Health Profile as a tool designed to help local government and health services identify key issues which needed addressing to improve the health and wellbeing of children and tackle health inequalities. A range of issues relevant to child health and wellbeing in Lancashire were highlighted. The key issue was about starting early and giving every child the best possible start in life. Issues highlighted were:

- Teenage pregnancy
- Smoking in pregnancy
- Breastfeeding
- MMR immunisation
- Dental health
- Overweight / obesity
- Mental health
- Road safety

In terms of these issues there were different outcomes in children's health and wellbeing in the districts. There were significant differences between districts and within districts.

It was pointed out that care provided in the first 1000 days of a child's life had more influence on a child's future than any other time in its life. There were significant provisions in place for the first 1000 days child development programme.

Members were advised that regarding mother and baby clinics, improvements had been made and lessons had been learned from children's centres. Baby centres offered holistic support for mothers and babies and through working with partners problems could be picked up at an early stage and be addressed.

Members were informed that the health visitor offer was a universal offer. The Children and Family Wellbeing Service was aware that some centres had closed which impacted on support to rural areas, however it was highlighted that the provision of one to one support for families in rural areas was available.

Members stated that in areas where there were a lack of facilities could libraries and leisure centres be looked at for parents and children to use. It was confirmed that discussions were taking place with libraries about working together and joining their services up. The services could also be delivered in primary schools. It was ensuring a safe environment for mothers and children.

It was reported that the importance of getting the outcomes of children's health right early was vital. The Authority could not do this on its own and neighbourhood working was important as was the First 1000 Days. The Ante Natal Contact was a new contact and was about preparation for parenthood and was offered by health visitors. The biggest challenge was total neighbourhood working and joined up working was the way forward. The neighbourhood approach was about moving resources around more smartly and this was only achievable through true partnership working.

The committee was informed that there was a piece of work in progress around oral health improvement in children.

Resolved: That;

- i. The report presented be noted.
- ii. A report be presented to the committee in six months on the progress and improvements being made.

7. Children's Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2018/19

The work plan for the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee for the 2018/19 municipal year was presented. The topics included were identified at the work planning workshop held on 10 July 2018.

Regarding the Children's Partnership Board there was a request for more clarity on where it stood and if there would be enough funding from LCC for it to remain.

The final report from the 'Supporting Children at Special School with Medical Conditions' Task and Finish Group would be presented at the next meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

A report on teenage suicide would also be coming to a future meeting of the committee.

Resolved: That the report presented be noted.

8. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

9. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee will take place on Wednesday 5 December at 2:00pm in Cabinet Room C (The Duke of Lancaster Room) at the County Hall, Preston.

L Sales
Director of Corporate Services

County Hall
Preston