

Lancashire County Council

Corporate Parenting Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 16th March, 2021 at 6.00 pm in Zoom Virtual Meeting - Zoom

Present: Members

County Councillor Ian Brown	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Stephen Clarke	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor David Foxcroft	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Jayne Rear	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Julie Gibson	- Lancashire County Council
Marieta Birt	- Fostering Forum
Liz Donnelly Nelson	- Adoption
Brendan Lee	- Children's Social Care, LCC
Bradley	- LINX Representative
Natasha	- LINX Representative
Jaymie	- LINX Representative
Kris	- LINX Representative

Co-opted members

Barbara Bath	Fostering, Adoption, Residential and YOT Team, LCC
Julie Dawkins	- Fostering Providers
Audrey Swann	- Vulnerable and Looked After Children, LCC
Amanda Mansfield	- Independent Reviewing Officers, LCC
Stephen Young	- Corporate Management Team, LCC
Dylan Williams	- Barnardo's
Nighat Parveen	- Child and Family Wellbeing Service, LCC
Moya McKinney	- Leaving Care Service, LCC
Gina Power	- Children in Our Care, LCC
Cathy Trengove	- Barnardo's

Other Attendees

Jane Hylton	- Leaving Care, LCC
Kirsty Clarke	- National Youth Advocacy Service
Umer Khonat	- Business Intelligence Team, LCC
Sam Gorton	- Democratic Services, LCC
Sharon Hubber	- Children's Social Care, LCC
Brian Wood	- Child and Family Wellbeing Service, LCC
Mandy Williams	- Family Safeguarding, LCC
Edwina Grant OBE	- Education and Children's Services, LCC

Paul McIntyre
Judith Roberts

- Safeguarding, Inspection and Audit, LCC
- De Oscuro Theatre Company

1. Introductions and Apologies

All were welcomed to the meeting and apologies were received from Dr Nicola Bamford, Caroline Waldron and Kirsty Byrne.

Julie Dawkins, Child Action North West had replaced David Barrow as the fostering provider for the next 12 months and was welcomed to her first meeting of the Board.

2. Notes of the Meeting and Matters Arising from 21 January 2021

Resolved: That the minutes were agreed as an accurate record and there were no matters arising.

3. Child and Family Wellbeing Service

Nighat Parveen, Child and Family Wellbeing Service, Lancashire County Council provided an update on the remodel of the Child and Family Wellbeing Service, which has aligned itself to the Family Safeguarding Model that has been developed by colleagues in Children's Social Care. The Child and Family Wellbeing Service responds to those children and families that require early help in Lancashire at Level 2 on the Continuum of Need. Details of the service offer for children, young people and families was circulated with the agenda.

The service has been aligned to four main themes, two of which are:

- i) Family intensive support – which involves intensive casework for families with complex needs and provides individualised support to families from lead professionals.
- ii) Group work – whole host of group work sessions that are delivered to support families, children and young people who need additional support in a variety of areas and is accessible in a number of venues face to face and online. There are also a number of parenting programmes delivered too in group work and in 1:1 sessions.

The Council has an ambition for "Team around the School" and a celebration event was held on 1 March 2021 and the Child and Family Wellbeing Service are in the process of developing a "Community Offer" that will be its contribution to the wider "Team around the School".

Resolved: That the Board noted the update.

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

Judith Roberts, De Oscuro Theatre Company had directed a project, Me, Myself and Us, that Lancashire's Children in Care Council (LINX) had been involved in, during 2020, however due to the COVID-19 pandemic they had not been able to perform the play which had been planned for April 2020 and the project was put on hold. It had been hoped that it would resume later in the year and as time passed it became clear that that was not going to be possible either.

The young people provided the Board with a summary of what they wanted to say about the project, and it was followed by the part-script that had been developed. The characters and events were created by the young people and inspired by their own experience. The object was to develop a piece of theatre which would make the statements that young people wanted to make in a way that allowed people to hear them through drama. The project was hosted by the University of Central Lancashire and it was supported by Barnardo's in Lancashire and funded by the Arts Council. The group had met each week from January to early March 2020, when the pandemic hit and it had to stop. Part of the script had been circulated to the Board prior to the meeting.

The young people also informed the Board of how the project had helped them and why they had become involved in the project and that they had enjoyed the opportunity and experience the project had enabled them and especially, how their confidence had grown.

The statements that had been provided from the young people from the project, were noted to be useful tools that could be part of staff training, who work alongside children in care and care experienced young people and as a service as a whole and it was noted that these would be used in the future.

Resolved: That the Board thanked the young people for sharing their experience of the project, Me, Myself and Us and that the summary statements would be used in staff training and developing the service.

5. Family Safeguarding

Mandy Williams, Lancashire Family Safeguarding, Lancashire County Council updated the Board on the Family Safeguarding model and where it fits in with the wider changes across Children's Services. The County Council launched the new Family Safeguarding model on the 11 February 2021 and in order to support the implementation of the model it was necessary to remodel the whole Children's Social Care Service, which commenced on the 4 January 2021. This allowed for staff and management to be in place ready for the full launch on the 11 February 2021 and the evaluation is being undertaken by the "What Works Centre" who were commissioned by the Department for Education and will conclude in 2023. The official launch took place on the 1 March 2021 and was a virtual event with several speakers both external and internal, with the purpose of

the launch being to ensure all partners were aware of the implementation and provided staff an opportunity to say how it felt to be in the new structure and what they were hoping to achieve.

Family Safeguarding has been introduced as part of the transformation of Children's Services within Lancashire that has meant investing significantly in Early Help, developing teams around the schools and moving from localities to functions. As a Council, it is ensuring that children in care have secure and stable homes and that it invests in the ongoing support for Care Leavers. The whole service is ambitious to deliver the best quality 'good and outstanding' service, to listen to Lancashire children, young people and their families and carers, and to work in a way that builds on family's strengths.

The presentation that was attached to the agenda was given to the Board which provided further details on the Family Safeguarding Model:

- Work carried out prior to the launch.
- Why did the Service need to change?
- Changes to Heads of Service responsibility following the Children's Social Care remodelling.
- Key components of Family Safeguarding.
- What does a Lancashire Family Safeguarding Team look like?
- Team roles.
- What difference does the Team hope it will make?
- Next steps.

The Board noted that LINX had been involved with the recruitment of social workers and working with children, young people and families in shaping Child Protection Conferences and there is a group called Family Focus which is around listening to families who are going through family safeguarding so they can feedback how it feels for them and to enable the shaping of the service in Lancashire and are committed to listening to children, young people and families.

Resolved: That the Corporate Parenting Board noted the progress of the model and how the service would move forward following its implementation.

6. Children's Permanence Service, Children in Our Care and Leaving Care

Moya McKinney, Leaving Care Service, Lancashire County Council gave a brief overview on the Permanence Service and recent developments in both Children in Our Care and the Leaving Care Service, where both services have benefited from the focus of one Head of Service and five Senior Managers who work across the whole of the Council's footprint, with a flattened management structure and significant investment in staffing within the Leaving Care Service. The reason for these changes is to ensure there is a clear focus on achieving consistency in practice and the offer, to all children and young people in

Lancashire and an ambitious plan for the future. This is particularly the case for Lancashire's young adults aged between 18 and 25 years in Lancashire.

The Leaving Care Service has seen additional staffing of two Senior Managers, withdrawal of two Practice Managers, increase of seven Team Managers, ten Personal Advisors as well as welcoming seven social work apprentices. This has allowed the Council to reshape the service and be consistent with its offer to all care leavers.

The Board noted that the key changes currently include more frequent face to face visits, an offer of direct service provision to young people over the age of 21, increased expectations of the multi-agency support made available to young people and having higher aspirations for them all. Plans are also in place for stronger collaboration with our young people and our partners to deliver along key priority areas:

- i) More opportunities for all to achieve in education and employment.
- ii) More appropriate and sustainable housing for all our care leavers.
- iii) Achieving and maintaining good physical mental health.
- iv) Support to maintain family and social relationships.
- i) Ensuring our care leavers are effectively safeguarded and have appropriate timely support at any time they may not feel safe.

Gina Power, Children in Our Care Service, Lancashire County Council updated the Board on the new Children in Our Care Service, which comprises of three Senior Managers, 16 Team Managers and 93 social workers. The structure has allowed the Service to bring together all of the Children in Our Care Teams across Lancashire, which will enable a consistent and improved service to all children and young people no matter where they live or who their social worker is.

The Board also noted that plans are in place for stronger collaboration with young people and the Council's partners to deliver within the key priority areas which are:

- i) Improving the mental health offer for children and young people in Lancashire, particularly those who have more complex needs.
- ii) Achieving permanence and placement stability through increased focus on high quality homes for children in our care.
- iii) Supporting workforce development to encourage social workers to dream big for our children and work alongside them to create aspirational care plans.
- iv) More opportunities to improve children's physical and emotional health.
- v) Develop better reports which look for new ways to measure outcomes and success for our children.
- vi) Ensure that the right children are in our service.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, work has commenced on supporting the children's recovery, which includes supporting their educational needs, where they have missed face to face teaching time as well as their special talents which they may have missed. Support is also needed, where relationships may have been lost with family and friends, during the last 12 months. At the heart of everything the service does, is engagement and participation and to be involved in every aspect of what the service does, from writing a care plan with a social worker and a young person, involved in interviews for social workers and managers, or reviewing policies and procedures which young people are involved in currently.

During the third National lockdown, which is currently ongoing, the most important aspect of the service is to engage with the young people and visit them and this will continue to be the focus going forward.

It was noted that following the change in the Service and how the Board would know it was being successful, would be from feedback from care leavers, the better outcomes that were being achieved and reported to regularly at these meetings and in terms of children in our care coming through the service, that they are better prepared for leaving care, due to collaboration taking place with residential homes, foster carers and the Children in Our Care Teams.

Resolved: That the Board noted the update and considered the impact for our children and young people in both the short and longer term.

7. Monthly Performance Report

Umer Khonat, Business Intelligence Team, Lancashire County Council provided an overview of performance information for February 2021 that is produced in relation to Children's Social Care and more specifically Children in Care and Care Leavers that the Board received with the agenda papers.

The Board received the headline indicators which are a subset of the main indicator set, which gives further breakdown data.

A few highlights from the data was:

- Number of referrals – since lockdown referrals have been decreasing and there have been fewer referrals from education, due to schools be closed. As lockdown is eased referrals will be monitored closely and where increases are being found, there is pinpoint work (down to Ward level) to challenge where this happens.
- Number of Re-referrals – children who have been re-referred during a 12 month period. The trajectory again is decreasing, and Lancashire's rates are below National figures as well as statistical neighbours.
- Number of children on Children in Need Plans (CiN) - again decreased, and there are 171 fewer children on plans since January 2021.

- Number of Child Protection Plans - these have also decreased, and since February 2020 to February 2021, there has been a decrease of 282 plans (a third).
- Number of Children Looked After – for five months, the rates have been decreasing and there are 36 fewer children in care in comparison to January 2021.
- Percentage of Children Looked After with an up to date Statutory Visit – 95% of children in care have been seen within timescales.
- Percentage of Children Looked After with an up to date health assessment – this is the highest it has been in over 2 years at 92.9%.
- Percentage of Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation (18-20 year) has seen an increase of seven care leavers in more suitable accommodation.
- Percentage of Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training (18-20 years) has unfortunately reduced by ten care leavers. A further look into the data set of those Not in Education, Employment or Training was broken down as follows:
 - 64 care leavers– due to illness or disability
 - 48 care leavers – due to parenting or pregnancy
 - 230 care leavers – due to "other" category when recording
- Percentage of Care Leavers with who the Local Authority has been in contact with in the last 2 months (18-20 years) has been maintained for the second month at 591.

Following on from the ongoing issues in terms of dental assessments, Brendan Lee and Caroline Waldron have established a pilot scheme in Rossendale with a Dentist who runs his own practice. The pilot will commence on the 22 March 2021. The Board noted that the pilot will be around enhancing and prioritising dental checks for children looked after. The Dentist is committing to two days per week for young people in care settings and will work closely with Amanda Barbour, Senior Manager for Rossendale to prioritise the young people in care settings who have been missed. This pilot will then be rolled out across Lancashire.

A testament was given in terms of Health Assessments and multi-agency working with partners that has seen the percentage of assessments carried out in February 2021 at 92.9% when a few years ago, this figure was at 12%.

Resolved: That the Board noted the performance information presented.

8. Independent Reviewing Service Annual Report 2019-20

Paul McIntyre, Safeguarding, Inspection and Audit Service, Lancashire County Council updated the Board on the Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) Annual Report 2019-2020 for Looked After Children and Safeguarding, which the Board had received prior to the meeting. As part of its statutory function in overseeing and quality assuring the corporate parenting of children and young people looked after by the local authority in Lancashire the Independent Reviewing Officer Service incorporates a Child Protection Co-ordinator role (chairing Child Protection Conferences) and so that work is also included within the service report.

The current report covers the period 2019-2020 and therefore prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The report is typically finalised in early summer, however, submission to the Corporate Parenting Board has been delayed by the pandemic and it would be expected to return to the Board in Autumn 2021 with the 2020-2021 Annual Report.

A further presentation had been circulated to the Board prior to the meeting, which Paul alluded to and where further information can be found on the following four main areas:

- Children Looked After
- Children subject of a Child Protection Plan
- IRO Oversight and Assurance
- Recommendations and Priorities

Resolved: That the Corporate Parenting Board read and noted the updates provided, as part of its wider oversight of corporate parenting.

9. Care Leavers Conferences

Brendan Lee, Children's Permanence – Children in Our Care and Leaving Care Service, Lancashire County Council informed the Board that planning is still ongoing for two conferences to take place, in relation to local businesses and economic growth (raising the expectations of the family business – Lancashire County Council) which links in with the Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) plan and will reinforce the need for apprenticeships for young people. This work is still ongoing, and the conferences will be taking place in the very near future.

10. CPB Development Day

This item was not discussed.

11. Any Other Business

Edwina Grant OBE, Executive Director of Education and Children's Services thanked staff and members for their contribution at the meeting and also thanked County Councillor Brown as the retiring Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board for the work he had done throughout his time on the Board.

County Councillor Brown also thanked all attendees and commented that it had been a privilege to be part of the Board for four years as an Elected Member and the last four years as Chair of the Board.

Marieta Birt was also thanked for her contribution as Fostering Forum representative and who was also stepping down from the Board.

A special thanks was given to Sam Gorton, by County Councillor Brown, for her support to him, throughout his time on the Board.

12. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday, 16 June 2021 at 6pm, format to be confirmed.