

## Lancashire County Council

### Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement

Tuesday, 16th April, 2013 at 2.00 pm in Cabinet Room 'B' - County Hall, Preston

#### Agenda

##### Part 1 (Open to Press and Public)

No.	Item
-----	------

1.	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>
----	------------------------------

2.	<b>Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non Pecuniary Interests</b>
----	--

Members are asked to consider any Pecuniary and Non Pecuniary Interests they may have to disclose to the meeting in relation to matters under consideration on the Agenda.

3.	<b>Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 February 2013</b>	(Pages 1 - 8)
----	--	---------------

4.	<b>Impact of Partnership Working on School Improvement</b>	(Pages 9 - 16)
----	--	----------------

5.	<b>Customer Experience Project - Shared Lives Carers: Review of Assessment Process for Carers</b>	(Pages 17 - 42)
----	---	-----------------

6.	<b>Lancashire Break Time</b>	(Pages 43 - 48)
----	------------------------------	-----------------

7.	<b>Urgent Business</b>
----	------------------------

An item of Urgent Business may only be considered under this heading where, by reason of special circumstances to be recorded in the minutes, the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency. Wherever possible, the Chief Executive should be given advance warning of any Members' intention to raise a matter under this heading.

8.	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>
----	-----------------------------

The next meeting of the Cabinet Committee will take place on Friday 14 June 2013 at 2pm in Cabinet Room B.

I M Fisher  
County Secretary and Solicitor

County Hall  
Preston

# Agenda Item 3

## Lancashire County Council

### Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 26th February, 2013 at 2.00 pm in Cabinet Room 'B' - County Hall, Preston**

**Present:**

County Councillor Geoff Driver (Chair)

#### **County Councillors**

T Ashton  
A Atkinson

Mrs S Charles  
M Perks

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor Jennifer Mein.

#### **2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

None disclosed.

#### **3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 January 2013**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2013 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

#### **4. Quarterly Corporate Performance Monitoring and Improvement - Corporate Scorecard Report & Recovery Plans**

Michael Walder, Senior Policy and Performance Officer, introduced the quarterly corporate performance monitoring report for quarter 3 of 2012/13 (October 2012 – December 2012).

Michael explained that the Quarter 3 monitoring report highlighted 5 indicators that have missed their annual target or are currently forecast to miss their year-end 2012/13 targets. These 5 indicators correspond to 14% of the total number in the scorecard and are:

- The proportion of children looked after achieving 5 GCSEs A\*-C including English and maths.
- The percentage of people who would benefit from receiving services via self directed support who have personal budgets.
- The rate of youth re-offending.
- The number of carers receiving assessments or reviews
- The number of working days lost to sickness absence per full time equivalent (FTE) employee within Lancashire County Council.

A Recovery Plan has been produced for each of these indicators.

The Recovery Plans for the first 3 indicators listed above were presented to the Committee at Appendix A to this report, whilst the Recovery Plans for the other 2 measures were presented and agreed at previous meetings of the Cabinet Committee.

**Performance Indicator 1: Increase the proportion of children looked after achieving 5 GCSEs grades A\*-C including English and Maths from 11.9% to 18%**

Sue Parr, Manager (Primary) and Associate Headteacher Virtual School Alternative and Complementary Education and Residential Services (ACERS) gave an update on this indicator and explained that the current performance for 2012 was 12.9%.

Sue explained that there are fluctuations in the year on year figure as the cohort that sit GCSEs each year is relatively small. Sue also highlighted some of the other performance indicators relating to the attainment of Children Looked After (CLA).

In 2012, the performance /GCSE results of Lancashire Children Looked After at Year 11 (age 16) improved on 2011 results by an average of nearly 4% (over all GCSE achievements), and were better than had been predicted by Fischer Family Trust (FFT provides predicted pupil GCSE grades based on prior attainments and achievements) given the profile of needs of the 93 young people who were tracked.

Similar progress was made by Lancashire CLA who are educated out of the county, though substantially more CLA educated in Lancashire achieved 5 GCSE grades A\* -C than CLA educated out of county.

Sue also presented data analysis from the **Virtual School for CLA - Report on Attainments and Achievements of CLA 2011- 2012** (first year of collation and analysis) regarding the influences and barriers associated with Year 11 CLA educational attainment and achievement as follows

**a) Special Educational Needs**

- 25% of the 93 pupils had identified Special Educational Needs and were not predicted or entered for 5 GCSEs +English and Maths.
- 11 pupils were not entered for any GCSEs.
- All CLA pupils experiencing Special Educational Needs made excellent progress in relation to the individual educational targets set at their SEN Annual Statement Review or Individual Education Plan Review.

**b) Stability of Care Placement**

- Despite significant proactive work across all services ,58% of all Year 11 CLA had experienced numerous care placements during their time in care .This often has a detrimental effect on the educational attainments of CLA as they struggle to settle in a new care placement

(and often a new school). However, Virtual School and social workers are now work closely to ensure minimum disruption to education for all CLA.

**c) Stability of school provision**

- Despite concerted efforts and planning by social workers to ensure that a young person's change of care placement does not adversely affect education ; 54% of Year 11 CLA had experienced 2 or more school moves during Key Stage 4( Year 10 and 11). Evidence from Children In Care Council discussions indicated that this has an extremely detrimental effect on CLA educational attainments, as this disrupts CLA's continuity of courses and friendship groups even more than moving care placement.
- However, 'CLA Multi Agency Champions Groups' (professionals from Education, Health, Social Care, Pupil Access Teams , Special Educational Needs Teams etc) have been set up in north, south, and east areas of Lancashire, to specifically challenge schools and social care in ensuring that the educational needs of these young people are prioritised. This is proving very successful in ensuring that the barriers to CLA remaining in one school are successfully addressed.

**d) Carer /Social Worker/School knowledge and understanding of the education system, pupils expected attainments levels ,SEN procedures and protocols, and available funding streams**

- In December 2012, The Virtual School for Children Looked After arranged and delivered a Multi-Agency Conference for 'The Promotion of Education for Children Looked After' . The conference evaluations highlighted the lack of information available to Foster Carers, Residential Care Workers, Social Workers, and Designated teachers regarding the recent changes in the education system. This has led, on occasions, to ineffective advocacy and support for young people in their educational choices and aspirations.
- Although The Personal Education Plan of every young person looked after is initiated by the social worker, from January 2013, the educational targets, interventions required, and outcomes are set by the Designated Teacher for CLA, as only they will already have significant knowledge of the CLA's educational assessments, aspirational targets and expectations. This ensures that Personal Educational Plans are quality documents and can be effectively monitored, challenged and verified by Virtual School.

**e) CLA requiring intervention from Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)**

- 23% of all Year 11 CLA are involved with CAMHS . However, other services ie SCAYT (Support for Carers and Young People Together) deliver effective support to foster families who are experiencing difficulty in dealing with young people exhibiting emotional and mental health issues. Yet, the CLA experiencing these difficulties are also very

often the young people with poor school attendance, and low attainments and achievements, who do not achieve their potential.

**f) Prioritising Literacy and Numeracy**

- In 2012, the Virtual school prioritised the promotion of Literacy and Numeracy for all CLA across Lancashire; as without these skills sets, primary school CLA are at a disadvantage when they start secondary school, secondary school CLA cannot effectively access all other GCSE subjects, and school leavers do not have the appropriate skills they need for the job market.
- As a consequence, the number of CLA aged 16 years able to effectively read, write and compute has doubled from 14% in 2011 to 35% in 2012.

**g) National Issue :Assessment and Marking of GCSEs**

- 19 pupils were affected by the change in the GCSE marking system
- 6 pupils (6.5 %) from the cohort were predicted Grade C for English, but were graded D
- 11 pupils (12.9%) achieved 5 GCSEs A-C + ENGLISH only (no Maths)
- 8 pupils (8.6%) achieved 5 GCSE A-C + MATHS only (no English)

**Accountability**

Sue explained that the above outcomes and issues have been discussed at length with the Corporate Parenting Board and the Directorate for Children and Young People's Extended Leadership Team to ensure that improving the educational achievements of Children Looked After remains a high priority within Children and Young Peoples Directorate

The Virtual School also elicits the views of the Children in Care Council to ensure that young people in Lancashire are receiving the support they need and require to reach their potential (from all services).

In debating this indicator the Committee discussed a number of options to potentially increase the scope of the indicator, including setting longer-term (ambitious) targets and being clear about who/what we are benchmarking against (other authorities, improvement trend and/or individual development) and the targets that must be met, looking at a wider range of Key Stage targets for Children Looked After (KS1, KS2, KS3 and KS4). The Committee expressed a view that it would be useful to see a report at the end of each year showing results for each Key Stage so that future attainment trends can be identified.

**Resolved:** The Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement noted the performance indicator update and requested careful consideration was given to subsequent target setting including reporting back to this committee at the end of each year showing what is happening at each stage (KS1, KS2, KS3 and KS4) so they can see future trends and where additional support may need to be targeted.

**Performance Indicator 2: Increasing the percentage of people who would benefit from receiving services via self directed support, who have personal budgets from 75% to 95%**

Barbara Lewis gave an update on this indicator and explained that the year end target for this indicator is 95% with a quarter 3 target of 90%.

During the year to 31 December 2012 there were 19,252 service users and carers receiving self directed support. This is 84.5% of all service users and carers who were receiving services and could be eligible for self directed support (22,779).

Barbara explained that there was initially a rapid increase in the number of people on self directed support, as almost every contact with a new or existing service user resulted in self directed support being started. However, from March 2011 this rapid increase slowed into a steady upward trajectory. In March 2012, when targets were set for 2012/13 it was anticipated that this steady increase would be maintained. However, a number of factors have affected the progress.

The majority of service users are relatively easily transferred on to self directed support when reviewed. However, there is a group of complex, high dependency service users particularly those who live in the community in shared housing who need to be reviewed as households, who require longer time to complete the transfer to self directed support.

Feedback received from service users and carers indicate that they appreciate time to think about their options. They tell the County Council that being rushed into making decisions about their support plans whilst still in a vulnerable, often crisis, situation was not the best approach. Hence the support planning process now includes 'time to think'. Consequently, although the vast majority of new service users are receiving self directed support, the purposely inbuilt delay means that they are not immediately reflected in the statistics.

Planned review activity in Personal Social Care has also been compromised due to competing demands on review teams, for instance, unplanned urgent reviews and changes to services as a result of commissioning activity which has necessitated an unplanned review. This meant that people who were in stable situations and receiving traditional services were least likely to receive a planned review, hence the opportunity to transfer them to self directed support didn't arise. There are 1060 people in this situation.

Lancashire County Council set an ambitious target for 2012/13, and at the time of setting the target no comparative information was available; however, a recent benchmarking exercise with 23 Local Authorities across the North West showed that as at 30th September 2012, Lancashire was in the top quartile and the North West average was 65.5%. The graph below shows Lancashire's position in relation to other North West authorities (with 3 authorities being unable to provide data for the exercise).

## Action being taken to improve performance

Barbara highlighted the action being taken to improve performance:

- A revision of the Personal Social Care structure has taken place to support planned review activity. The revised structure came into effect from 5 November 2012 with a manager and teams identified to lead on planned reviews.
- Within the review teams, transfer of those not currently receiving self directed support onto a Personal Budget has been given high priority for planned review activity.
- Staff have been identified within review teams to focus on transfers to self directed support and managers are currently allocating cases identified by business information as not in receipt of self directed support.
- It is estimated that it should be possible to achieve 90% by year end. This is a conservative estimate and the numbers could be higher dependent upon the progress and time taken in completing reviews of households which are more complex as they involve a higher number of interested parties.
- All competing and emerging priorities and potential performance issues will be reported to the Personal Social Care Performance Management Group, which meets monthly, by the County Operations Manager leading on reviews. If there will be an impact on current priorities, such as self directed support, details will be presented to the Directorate's Senior Management Team to confirm priority areas and activity.

**Resolved:** The Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement noted the performance indicator update and requested that further updates be provided on progress at an appropriate time later this calendar year.

### **Performance Indicator 3: Reduce the rate of re-offending from 39.6% to 38.6%**

Lisa Gregoire-Parker presented this indicator and explained that the current measure in the corporate scorecard uses the National Ministry of Justice (MOJ) re-offending indicator. Due to the way in which this measure is calculated – it provides re-offending data which is 18 months old. The Youth Justice Board do not set re-offending targets for YOTs, but rather monitor the direction of travel and trends.

The National MOJ measure includes a significant number of young people within the cohort who would receive no YOT specific YOT intervention, but could receive other interventions such as fines, Conditional Discharges, and Reprimands. However, these young people would be included as re-offenders in the measure. Hence, the MOJ measure is problematic due to:

- the time delay of 18 months for reporting;
- the inclusion of many young people within the cohort measure who would have no YOT intervention.



Lancashire YOT's Youth Justice Management Board (YJMB) considers the measure as an unsatisfactory indicator of real time re-offending performance. Consequently, the YJMB requested that a 'new' local measure is developed which enables more real time reporting of reoffending.

Lancashire YOT has developed, what has become known as, the 'Reoffending Tally Measure'. The measure was designed to be simple to record and simple to understand. It is a monthly tally of all young people receiving a youth justice order or disposal who have had a previous YOT intervention. There are plans in place to extend this measurement to include those that may not re-offend in the youth justice system but in the adult criminal justice system. The data collated is produced at a district, team and county level. It provides a real-time view of re-offending in Lancashire and the effectiveness of YOT interventions.

Current performance based on the re-offending tally shows there is a reducing trend in re-offending – from a high of 63 in February 2012 to 43 in December 2012.

Lisa also highlighted the actions being taken to reduce the rate as detailed in the report (circulated).

The Committee commented that some of the work involved in reducing the re-offending rate could be linked with the Working Together with Families Project and that this was a link to explore.

**Resolved:** The Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement noted the performance indicator update and requested that further updates be provided on progress at an appropriate time later this calendar year.

## **5. Customer Experience Project (List of Projects and Future Potential Reporting)**

Michael Walder, Senior Policy and Performance Officer, presented the report.

Michael explained that the customer experience project was designed to offer Lancashire County Council services the facility to better understand the needs, experiences and aspirations of their service users to enable service improvements.

The individual research projects are undertaken by the county council's graduate management trainees. The programme is now in Wave 5 with approximately 40 services having undertaken research projects.

This current Wave of the programme involves 11 research projects that are scheduled to be undertaken and completed between December 2012 & July 2013.

Michael asked that the Cabinet Committee review the list of 11 customer experience project currently being undertaken/planned and advise which they would like to report back to future meetings.

**Resolved:** The Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement noted the report and agreed that the following four projects be reported back to future meetings:

- Shared Lives Services
- Older People's Service
- Environmental Services
- Children and Parent Support Service

**6. Urgent Business**

None.

**7. Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Cabinet Committee will be held on Tuesday 16 April 2013 at 2:00pm in Cabinet Room B, County Hall, Preston.

I M Fisher  
County Secretary and Solicitor

County Hall  
Preston

# Agenda Item 4

## Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement

Meeting to be held on 16 April 2013

Electoral Division affected: All
-------------------------------------

### Impact of Partnership Working on School Improvement

(Appendices 'A' and 'B' refer)

Contact for further information:

Jonathan Hewitt, (01772) 531663 Directorate for Children and Young People

[jonathan.hewitt@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:jonathan.hewitt@lancashire.gov.uk)

#### Executive Summary

This report sets out the procedures for identifying schools in difficulty and assessing the level of risk they face in improving the quality of provision and standards of achievement. It also highlights the impact of the partnership working between the local authority, schools and diocesan and church authorities in improving the performance of low attaining schools and helping schools to sustain their improvement.

#### Recommendation

The Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement is asked to note and comment on the report as appropriate.

#### Background and Advice

The past two years has seen a change in the statutory role of the local authority in supporting school improvement. In the light of these changes the relationship between schools and the local authority is increasingly important and Lancashire has developed a very strong partnership with schools over the past decade. The great majority of schools buy into School Improvement Services and the Schools Forum provides additional support to schools in difficulty where appropriate.

In order to identify schools which are at risk of low attainment an Early Warning system has been established. The advisory service uses both data such as examination performance, attendance information and the rate of exclusions as well as local intelligence that is gained from the work of school advisers to identify and provide early support for schools. The Early Warning Groups for both primary and secondary schools (EWG) meet each half term to review the list of schools which are causing concern and similar reviews are held with representatives of Church and Diocesan Authorities. This review process looks at the progress of schools in difficulty and considers:

- The addition of schools to the list
- The removal of schools from the list
- The impact of support and challenge on school performance
- The introduction of new improvement strategies

In assessing the level of risk of schools being unable to make the necessary improvements themselves and sustain them over time, the following key criteria are used:

- Has the school been below Floor Standard over time?
- How well do leaders drive improvement?
- What is the profile of teaching in the school? (good, outstanding, satisfactory, inadequate)
- Are standards improving?
- Does the school ethos impact positively on pupil outcomes?
- Is the leadership and management of the school able to sustain improvement without LA intervention?

Following the review process a report is presented to the School Improvement Challenge Board which is chaired by the Director of Universal and Early Support Services and decisions about the level of support, challenge and intervention are made by the Board. A flowchart is contained at Appendix A that provides further information on how this process works.

Over the past 3 years this process of identifying schools in difficulty and providing support, challenge and intervention in partnership with schools and partners, including Church and Diocesan Authorities, has been highly effective in raising attainment in the lowest attaining primary and secondary schools. During this period a number of proven strategies to improve the quality of education have been used and these are set out in Appendix B. Through this partnership with schools the proportion of pupils gaining Level 4 or above in both English and mathematics has risen by over 25% in the lowest attaining primary schools, a much faster rate than the national average. At the same time the proportion of pupils gaining 5 or more good GCSEs including English and mathematics has increased by 15% in the lowest attaining secondary schools, again a much faster rate of improvement than in all schools nationally.

### **Impact on the quality of provision in the lower attaining primary schools**

Over the past 3 years the support for the lowest attaining primary schools has had a positive impact on the quality of education and the standards achieved. Of the 74 primary schools which were below the Floor Standard in 2009, 68 schools reached or exceeded the floor standard of 60% of pupils gaining level 4 or above in English and mathematics in 2012. Around half of this group of schools were above the floor standard in all 3 years and almost three quarters were above the floor standard in two of the 3 years. Only two of the schools did not go above the floor standard in this period and one of these had fewer than 10 pupils in Year 6. It is also worth noting that just under 60% of the schools were judged to be good in their most recent inspection and only three schools were judged to be inadequate.

Of another group of schools which had been identified as consistently low attaining in 3 or more years leading up to 2010, the strategy of support and challenge has also proved effective in raising standards and improving the quality of provision. As a result there is currently no school in Lancashire which has been below the Floor

Standards for more than the last 3 years and only 1 school which has more than 10 pupils in Year 6 has been below for each of the last 3 years.

Of those schools which had been below the floor standards before 2010, currently half are considered to be at a low level of concern, around 38% are considered to be a medium level of concern with 12% requiring intensive support and challenge.

### **Impact on the quality of provision in the lower attaining secondary schools**

Over the past 3 years the support for the lowest attaining secondary schools has had a positive impact on the quality of education. Of the 19 secondary schools which were below the Floor standard in 2009, 15 schools reached or exceeded the floor standard of 40% of pupils gaining 5 good GCSEs including English and mathematics in 2012. Of these schools almost half were above the floor standard in all 3 years and around three quarters were above the floor standard in two of the 3 years. Two schools did not go above the floor standard in this 3 year period. Over one third of the schools were judged to be good or better in their most recent inspection and one school has recently been judged to be inadequate. The current risk assessments indicate that around one third of schools are considered to be at a low level of concern, just over half judged to be at a medium level of concern with around 10% receiving intensive support.

### **Consultations**

N/A

### **Implications:**

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

### **Risk management**

No significant risks have been identified in relation to the proposals contained within this report

### **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

#### **List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
Primary School performance tables 2009/2011	2009-2012	Jonathan Hewitt Directorate for Children and Young People (01772) 531663
Secondary School Performance tables 2009/2011	2009-2012	Jonathan Hewitt Directorate for Children and Young People (01772) 531663

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A

**Early Warning System**

Regular meetings to discuss:-

- Schools below floor (half termly: feeds into School Improvement Challenge Board - SICB)
- Schools on the Monitoring and Intervention Team list
- Schools considered to be vulnerable (monthly)

Evidence required:-

- Current overall RAG rating for
  - Next Ofsted judgements
  - Standards of achievement
  - Quality of teaching
  - Leadership and management
  - Behaviour and Safety
  - Involvement of Governors

Adviser input at meetings:-

- Updated reports
- Notes of visits

Adviser role following the meeting:-

- Sharing outcomes with schools

If amber/red for the above:-

Focused School Service Guarantee agenda (ie in addition to school agenda):-

- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching: how do you know, evidence, impact of Continual Professional Development (CPD)
- Achievement: attainment, progress, regular moderation by adviser, progress of groups, narrowing the gap
- Leadership and management: assessment, tracking, School Development/Improvement Plan, CPD, Governors involvement

(develop single sided A4 sheets for each. Sent in advance to the school for School Self Evaluation, as a prelude to discussion. Active moderation)

Early Warning Group discuss outcomes.  
Decisions made:



Does the school need additional adviser support? (up to 3 days)

Does the school need additional support/ challenge / intervention? Pass to SICB



Joint visit to school, Senior Adviser and school adviser.  
Meeting with Head Teacher and Chair of Governors and letter to school.





## Appendix B

A wide range of strategies are used to support low attaining schools and these are tailored to meet the individual needs of each school. In schools requiring intensive support a greater number of strategies may be required. The strategies include:

- Strengthening governance by :
  - Appointing additional governors
  - Carrying out a review of governance to identify issues for action
  - Providing training for governors on carrying out their monitoring and evaluation role
  - Establishing a governors' committee to challenge leaders and monitor the performance of the school
  
- Strengthening leadership and management by:
  - Developing effective action plans which have clear targets, outcomes and milestones which can be monitored closely
  - Carrying out a leadership and management review at whole school or departmental level to identify issues for action
  - Providing additional leadership capacity through brokering the support of an outstanding headteacher / senior manager from a strong school with experience in overcoming similar barriers to success
  - Brokering support by National and Local Leaders in Education through working with Teaching Schools
  - Brokering collaborations between schools so that schools can share leadership including the appointment of an executive headteacher who leads more than one school
  - Providing training and support for leaders at all levels, particularly in monitoring and evaluating pupil achievement and the quality of teaching
  - Providing detailed HR advice and support in managing difficult personnel issues
  - Providing detailed financial advice and support in managing challenging budget issues
  
- Strengthening teaching and learning by:
  - Providing additional teaching capacity through brokering the support of outstanding teachers from other schools on a temporary basis to work alongside, support and challenge staff
  - Carrying out a review of teaching and learning to identify issues for action
  - Providing training programmes and tailored support for staff on moving from satisfactory to good and from good to outstanding
  - Working with Teaching Schools to broker support from Specialist Leaders in Education
  - Providing specific consultant support for schools in subjects where there is underachievement such as writing and mathematics
  - Providing training programmes on specific aspects of teaching and learning such as the effective use of planning, assessment and marking to raise achievement
  - Brokering collaborations between schools so that schools can share teaching expertise through outstanding staff working across schools

- Raising achievement by:
  - Providing training in implementing specific programmes to raise achievement in subjects where there is underachievement such as English, mathematics and science
  - Monitoring pupil achievement through looking at work and holding discussions with pupils to identify areas for development
  - Brokering good practice from schools with particular expertise in raising achievement in specific subject areas
  - Providing support in improving behaviour and attendance through reviewing systems and procedures and brokering support from schools with outstanding practice in these areas

## Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement

Meeting to be held on 16 April 2013

Electoral Division affected: All
-------------------------------------

### Customer Experience Project – Shared Lives Carers: Review of assessment process for carers

(Appendix 'A' refers)

Contact for further information:

Michael Walder, 01772 533637, Corporate Policy and Performance Team,

[Michael.Walder@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:Michael.Walder@lancashire.gov.uk) or

Oliver Collins, 01772 533464, Corporate Policy and Performance Team,

[Oliver.collins@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:Oliver.collins@lancashire.gov.uk)

#### Executive Summary

The customer experience project was designed to offer Lancashire County Council services the facility to better understand the needs, experiences and aspirations of their service users to enable service improvements.

Wave 5 of the project (December 2012 – July 2013) is currently underway and 11 projects have now been confirmed and allocated to the corporate graduate management trainees who undertake and lead on the research (supported by the Corporate Policy and Performance Team). These 11 projects are listed over the page.

The Shared Lives Carers: Review of assessment process for carers customer experience project has been carried out as part of Wave 5 of the programme. This research focused on:

- The carers' experiences of the length of the assessment process
- Which services the carers wish to provide, and to whom
- What the carers' relationship was like with the Shared Lives Team.
- The carers' experience of the support they received and required during the assessment process.

The completed report for the Shared Lives Carers: Review of assessment process for carers is presented at Appendix 'A'.

#### Recommendation

That the Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement note and comment on the research, findings and recommendations of the Shared Lives Carers: Review of assessment process for carers customer experience project.

## **Background and Advice**

The customer experience project was designed to offer Lancashire County Council services the facility to better understand the needs, experiences and aspirations of their service users to enable service improvements.

The individual research projects are undertaken by the county council's graduate management trainees. The programme is managed, and individual projects are organised, under the guidance and support of the Corporate Policy and Performance Team. Thus far approximately 40 services have undertaken research as part of the programme and the final reports can be found on the [research and consultation database](#):

The latest services selected to undertake customer experience projects as part of wave 5 of the programme (December 2012 – July 2013) are:

- Older People's service
- Day Services
- Specialist Social Rehabilitation Service
- Shared Lives Service
- Residential Care
- Highways communication
- Environment Services
- Care leavers who are parents
- Children and Parent Support Service Review
- Care leavers who are parents
- Youth Homelessness

At the meeting of Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement on the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2013, the committee requested the following customer experience projects report back to an appropriate future meeting:

- Shared Lives Service
- Children and Parent Support Service Review
- Environment Services
- Older People's service

Attached at Appendix 'A' is the first of these reports, on the Shared Lives Service.

## **Consultations**

N/A

## **Implications:**

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

## **Risk management**

No significant risks have been identified in relation to the proposals contained within this report.

## **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

### **List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
Customer Experience Project (list of projects and future potential reporting – report to CCPI)	26 February 2013	Michael Walder/ENV/Tel:01772 533637

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A





Appendix 'A'

# Shared Lives Service Review of assessment process for carers

Customer Experience Project Report

**Rebecca Addey**

**21<sup>st</sup> February 2013**

This work has been carried out in partnership with the Shared Lives Service, the Corporate Policy and Performance Team, Rebecca Addey (Graduate Management Trainee) and the Corporate Research and Intelligence team.

For further information on the work of the Corporate Research and Intelligence Team, please contact us at:

Corporate Research and Intelligence

County Hall

Preston

PR1 8XJ

Tel: 0808 1443536

[www.lancashire.gov.uk/profile](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/profile)



## Contents

<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Research objectives .....	2
1.3 Methodology .....	2
2.4 Limitations .....	3
<b>2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.3 Main findings .....	4
2.4 Recommendations.....	4
<b>3.0 MAIN RESEARCH FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1 Demographics.....	6
3.2 The assessment process .....	7
3.3 The relationship with the Shared Lives Team .....	13
3.4 Experience of the support during the assessment process.....	14
<b>4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>16</b>
4.1 Recommendations.....	19

## 1.0 Introduction

The Customer Experience Project is aimed to gain a better understanding of the customer experience of Lancashire County Council services and how they relate to the front line staff experience of delivering services. Responding to the results of such research is intended to facilitate service level improvements.

This Customer Experience Project was commissioned by the Shared Lives Service to gain a better understanding of how carers perceive the application/assessment process of the service, which is delivered by the Adult and Community Services directorate. This research focuses upon the experiences of carers who have recently completed the assessment process.

### 1.1 Background

The Shared Lives Service (formerly known as the Adult Placement Service) is family-based care provided by individuals and families which enables adults to live with a family, sharing in family and community life, as well as helping people to develop their strengths and abilities.

Being a Shared Lives carer involves supporting people to meet their emotional, social, health, occupational and educational needs; enabling people to maintain existing friendships and develop new ones, and to gain the confidence and skills to become as independent as possible. Carers do this by offering long-term placements, short-term breaks, daytime support, or emergency care.

Following investment of £650,000 through Invest to Save funding, the service is growing at a significant rate with a strong emphasis being placed on streamlining processes, modernising information and developing new areas of support. The service currently supports over 180 Shared Lives Carers throughout the county.

As part of the recruitment process all Shared Lives Carers are taken through an in-depth assessment before approval via an Approval Panel made up of a Chair, service managers, personal social care representatives and a volunteer who has knowledge of the service. Following approval training and support is provided by the service, the carers are introduced to customers who wish to access the Shared Lives Service either for Long Term Support or for Short Breaks.

The service offers cost effective high quality supports to people with disabilities, older adults and people with mental health issues. Without increasing the number of additional Shared Lives Carers the service cannot continue to grow.

## 1.2 Research objectives

This research was scoped around the services' key themes. The objectives of the research were to find out;

- how carers first heard about the Shared Lives Service.
- the carers' experiences of the length of the assessment process.
- which services the carers wish to provide, and to whom.
- what the carers' relationship was like with the Shared Lives Team.
- the carers' experiences of the support they received and required during the assessment process.
- how the carers prefer to engage with the Shared Lives Team.

## 1.3 Methodology

### Identifying a suitable project

An initial meeting was held with the service lead to identify specific areas of research for this project.

This research project was commissioned with the intention of obtaining data to allow the service to develop a deeper understanding of the views of the Shared Lives Carers regarding the application and assessment processes. Research participants were not limited to a small geographical area: the Shared Lives Service covers the whole of Lancashire and the research was aimed to give insight into the differences in service levels across the county. The service lead communicated with Shared Lives Officers throughout Lancashire to identify suitable participants who have recently completed the assessment process. Fifteen interviews were planned across the three locality areas of Lancashire; East, North and Central. Fourteen interviews took place as one participant dropped out of the research due to time constraints.

The nominated Shared Lives Officers contacted each of the proposed participants to introduce them to the project and ensure they wished to participate. They were then contacted to arrange suitable times for the interviews to take place. Nine of the interviews were conducted by one person with the use of a Dictaphone to ensure all information was recorded. Five of the interviews were conducted by two people for ease of recording the information.

### Approach

The most appropriate method for conducting the research was discussed. The approaches of using case studies or individual interviews were considered and compared, with the strengths and limitations of each being evaluated. A case study can produce a more

detailed picture of an individual than other methods do. They are generally less structured so allow a true representation of the topic being studied. Individual interviews may allow someone to offer opinions they would not be comfortable speaking about in front of others.

With the aim of attaining the best information possible, participants had to be made to feel comfortable and relaxed which would help information to flow freely. It was therefore decided that individual interviews were the most suitable method for conducting the research. It was also agreed that in order to enhance the informal and relaxed atmosphere, interviewers would visit in casual clothing.

There were some cases where a face to face interview was not convenient for the applicant and so telephone interviews were used in these examples. Two of the interviews were conducted via telephone due to the participants' working schedules and this was a more convenient method for them.

The interview templates (see appendix A) were designed by the interviewer in consultation with the service. The interviews were to be conversational in nature, so the template was used only as a discussion guide to ensure the key objectives were met.

#### **Who conducted this research?**

The research was conducted by Rebecca Addey, Graduate Management Trainee. In the five interviews where there were two interviewers, the interviewers were Rebecca Addey and Charlotte Bracher, also a Graduate Management Trainee.

Shared Lives Service leads supporting the Customer Experience Project were Mike Schofield and Heather Bryan.

#### **Fieldwork dates**

The research was gathered between 30 January 2013 and 14 February 2013.

## **1.4 Limitations**

The nature of face to face interviews meant that only a small percentage of carers can participate. This means that the interviews do not offer results that are statistically representative for all carers in Lancashire; they only offer a snapshot of the opinions of Shared Lives carers. Results are therefore attributed to participants only and not the wider population.

## 2.0 Executive Summary

This research focused on the application/assessment process for people wishing to become Shared Lives carers. It took place in the form of interviews across Lancashire.

The research found that there are high levels of satisfaction amongst the Shared Lives carers in relation to the application/assessment process. However a number of issues did arise, which recurred throughout a number of participant's opinions and were mainly related to the promotion of the service and the availability of information on areas such as finance and self employment.

## 2.1 Main findings

The main findings from the research are:

- The majority of participants first heard about the Shared Lives service through word of mouth.
- The majority of carer assessments took over 4 months from application to approval.
- Many found the assessment process to be too lengthy, though they felt the questions asked were very thorough and relevant to the nature of the service.
- The majority of participants are generally pleased with the service and would recommend becoming a Shared Lives carer to others.
- Key qualities that participants feel are important attributes of the Shared Lives team are a personable service, good communication and approachable staff. The majority of participants described the support they have received as very good across all areas of Lancashire.
- Most participants prefer to communicate with the service through email, telephone and face to face.
- Several participants felt there is a lack of clarity on information such as the payment system, insurance, self employment and the voucher scheme.

## 2.2 Recommendations

- Promotion of the service for potential carers through accessible channels such as supermarkets, libraries and public transport.
- Promotion of the service for potential service users through an increase of communication/promotion across other professions such as Social Services to encourage an increase in referrals.
- Assign a member of the Shared Lives team as a specialist for the payment system process. This person should have full knowledge of the system and should be able to resolve issues/queries surrounding this.

- Implement an 'Introduction pack' for carers undergoing the assessment process. This could include detailed information sheets, outlines on what to expect, guidelines for completing processes and contacts for support.
- Support an increase in communication between the Shared Lives team and carers. It has been recommended that contact should be made monthly to advise on progress and share information.
- Monthly carer meetings available throughout Lancashire for all carers.

### 3.0 Main research findings

Due to the nature of the interviews taken place, the results are presented in this section by subheading.

#### 3.1 Demographics

Fourteen interviews were carried out across Lancashire; five in East, five in Central and four in North.

Eight females and six couples were interviewed.

None of those interviewed considered themselves to be disabled.

Three of those interviewed fit into the 18-39 age range, and 11 fit into the 40-65 age range.

Nine of those interviewed had been through the assessment process and approved as a shared lives carer for 0-6 months. Five of those interviewed had been through the assessment process and approved for 6+ months.

#### *How did you first hear about the Shared Lives Service?*

Area	East	Central	North	Total
Word of mouth (recommended by Shared Lives carer)	3	1	2	6
Word of mouth (other)	0	1	0	1
LCC website	0	0	1	1
Posters/leaflets	0	0	0	0
Other*	2	3	1	6

\*Other includes: In Sainsburys- staff promotion, Conversion from foster placement (3), previously worked as a social worker and already knew about the service (2)

The most prominent means of first hearing about the service is through word of mouth from current Shared Lives carers (6) and through other sources (6). No participants first heard about the Shared Lives service through posters/leaflets commissioned by the service. One participant first heard about the service through the Lancashire County Council website; however they were looking for work in the caring sector rather than specifically

looking at becoming a Shared Lives Carer. One participant first heard about the service through word of mouth by a friend who already knew about the service.

### **3.2 The assessment process**

*How long did the assessment take from initial application to approval?*

Area	East	Central	North	Total
Up to 2 months	0	1	0	1
2-3 months	2	1	0	3
4-5 months	0	2	3	5
6 months +	3	1	1	5

*What was your experience of the assessment process? (the length of the process)*

Area	East	Central	North	Total
Not long enough	0	0	0	0
About right	2	3	1	6
Too long	3	2	3	8

Participants whose assessment process took 5+ months from initial enquiry to approval felt that this amount of time was too long as there was an unnecessary gap in between the stages of assessment. Those participants whose assessment process took 0-4 months from initial enquiry to approval felt that this amount of time was right.

There is a link between the locality area and how long the participants felt the assessment process took. The majority of participants who live in North Lancashire felt that the process was too long.



## What was your experience of the assessment process (comments)

The following comments were made relating to the length of the application/assessment process;

- It was quite quick; 3 months (3)
- It took too long; 13-14 months (2). Both participants who commented on this are located in East.
- Shared Lives Team lost the applicant's paperwork- slowing the process down (2). This was in North and Central localities.
- Participant can see why it should take such a long time (1)
- A slow, but thorough process (1)
- A lengthy process, but worth it (1)
- Lots of 'red tape' slowing the process down (1)
- A slow process (1)
- The process took a while to get started after initial contact was made (1)
- Staff changes broke down the process (1)
- The process took far too long and the service had to be chased up (1)

There were no correlations, apart from those already outlined, between the locality area and the comments made in relation to the length of the application/assessment process.

The following comments were made relating to the questions that were asked during the application/assessment process;

- Thorough (9)
- In depth, but this is how it should be (5)
- Appropriate (4)
- Realistic (2)
- Relevant (2)
- Gave the participant opportunity to think about things not already considered (1)

There were no correlations between the locality area and the comments made in relation to the questions that were asked during the application/assessment process.

The following comments were made relating to the general relationship the participant had with the Shared Lives team during the application/assessment process;

- Good (4)
- Supportive (3)
- Very supportive (2)

- Excellent (2)
- Very Good (2)
- Mixed depending on person- some staff aren't very personable (1)

There were no correlations between the locality area and the comments made in relation to the relationship between participants and the Shared Lives Team.

***As a Shared Lives Carer, which services have you signed up to delivering?***

Area	East	Central	North	Total
Long term support	5	4	4	13
Short term support /Respite	5	5	4	14
Day Support	2	3	1	6
People with mental health issues	0	0	1	1
Alcohol/ drug rehabilitation	0	0	1	1
Older people	0	2	1	3

***Do you know about all of the services that carers can consider being involved with?***

Area	East	Central	North	Total
Yes	5	3	4	12
No	0	2	0	2

When asked which services the participants have signed up to delivering, the interviewer went through the different services outlined by the service leads. Following on, participants were asked if there were any services they hadn't previously known about.

**If no, which services didn't they know about?**

- People with mental health issues (2)
- Older people (2)
- Alcohol/drug rehabilitation (2)

There were clear results from this category with the types of care that participants wish to provide. Long term support (13), short term support/ respite (14) were the most prevalent, with 6 participants stating that they are interested in providing day support. Three participants wished to provide support to older people. One participant wished to provide support to people with mental health issues or individuals requiring alcohol/ drug rehabilitation.

When asked if they knew about all the services that Shared Lives service offers, the majority of participants responded that they had (12) however two participants said that prior to the interview they were unaware that the service provided support to people with mental health issues, older people and people requiring alcohol/drug rehabilitation. These two participants both live in the Central area of Lancashire.

*Which of our customers would you be interested in supporting?*

Area	East	Central	North	Total
People with Learning disabilities	5	5	4	14
Older adults	4	5	2	11
Adults with early stage dementia	3	4	2	9
Young people recovering from mental health issues*	3	3	3	9
People with Physical disabilities**	2	1	3	6
Young people recovering from alcohol or substance misuse*	1	3	2	6

\*Four participants commented that this is dependent however on individuals' circumstances and one participant said this would depend on the availability of relevant training.

\*\* Four participants said this is dependent on the individual's level of ability

All participants stated that they would be interested in supporting individuals with learning disabilities. Eleven participants would be interested in supporting older adults and nine participants would be interested in supporting adults with early stage dementia and young people recovering from mental health issues. Six participants would be interested in supporting individuals with a physical disability and young people recovering from alcohol/substance misuse.

There was no correlation between locality areas and the customers that participants would be interested in supporting. An exception to this is people with physical disabilities as only one participant living in the East area was interested in providing support to someone with a physical disability.

Participants across all areas were interested in supporting people with learning disabilities and older people.

***Would you consider having any funded adaptations made to your house to enable you to support someone with a physical disability?***

Area	East	Central	North	Total
Yes	3	1	2	6
No	2	4	2	8

**Further comments about having funded adaptations made to their house**

Yes

- If it was for a long term placement (2)
- It would depend on how much needed to be done (1)
- Maybe eventually, though not immediately (3)

No

- It wouldn't compliment their active lifestyle (2)
- Participant is currently renting- unable to adapt the house

### **3.3 The relationship with the Shared Lives Team**

*How would you describe the support you received from the Shared Lives Team?*

	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good
<b>Quality of information provided</b>	0	1*	0	1	12
<b>Professionalism</b>	0	0	0	1	13
<b>Reliability</b>	0	0	0	1	13
<b>Support and issues</b>	0	1**	0	2	11

\*The participant(s) felt there was a lack of communication

\*\*The participant(s) commented that nobody in the Shared Lives Team seemed to have full understanding of the financial side of the service. The participant(s) felt that when they contacted the Shared Lives Team for support with an issue they were being passed around and didn't receive a clear answer.

***What do you think makes a good relationship with the Shared Lives Team?***

- A personable service (9)
- Good communication (9)
- Approachable staff (7)
- Knowledgeable staff (4)
- Staff who are understanding of the carers' needs (3)
- Honesty between staff and carers (3)
- Trust between staff and carers (3)
- Staff who are contactable (2)
- Staff who are supportive (2)
- Good teamwork between staff (1)
- Proactive staff (1)
- Professional staff (1)

### **3.4 Experience of the support during the assessment process**

#### ***How do you feel about your first placement?***

Area	East	Central	North
Not at all prepared	0	0	0
Not prepared	0	0	0
Average/Unsure	0	0	1
Well prepared	0	2	0
Very well prepared	5	3	3

#### **Further comments**

- Two participant(s) weren't clear what the carers should be paying for and what the clients should be paying for
- Two participants weren't clear how the voucher scheme worked- confusing.
- Two participants weren't sure how the insurance system worked.

#### ***Do you think further support would be beneficial to your placement? If yes, please explain what support you would like and how it would be beneficial to you.***

- If the carer is awaiting a placement, it would be beneficial if the Shared Lives team contacted them once a month to let them know they haven't been forgotten (1)
- Detailed information on the payment system to make this clearer (2)
- Personal profiles for individuals sent in digital form to enable participant to organise the information to suit them (1)
- Information on the benefits for being a Shared Lives carer (e.g., bus passes) (1)
- Shadowing another carer prior to the first placement (1)
- Detailed information on what the carer/individual should be paying for (2)
- Information on local activities for the individuals (1)
- Regular, local meetings with other carers to share information and form extra areas for support (1)
- Emergency contact details for out of office hours (1)
- Clearly defined information/guidelines on what to expect (1)

***How do you prefer to engage with the service?***

In some of the responses, participants provided more than one preferred method of communication.

Area	East	Central	North
Email	2	4	3
Telephone	3	4	4
Letter	0	0	0
Face to face	4	4	0
Other*	0	0	1

\*Other: Via text

**Further comments following the interview:**

- It is a rewarding scheme (7)
- The Shared Lives staff are very approachable and supportive (7)
- The assessment process works particularly well (2)
- The participants are very happy with the service, and wish they had done it sooner (2)
- The carer meetings are an excellent source of support (2)
- The Shared Lives Service needs better promotion (7)
- It took too long to get the first placement following approval (4)
- There was a lack of clarity about the payment system (4)
- There were problems/lack of clarity with the insurance system (2)
- The participant(s) were unsure about how to arrange the self employment/tax (1)
- It would be beneficial to have training sessions just for the Shared Lives carers to enable them to be more specific (1)
- Communication between the Shared Lives Team and carers needs to improve (1)
- There needs to be more clarity on how the placement system works for new carers (1)



## 4.0 Conclusions and recommendations

The main findings from the interviews are:

### Liked about the service

There was a wide agreement that the Shared Lives Team are very approachable and supportive. This is particularly relevant as the 3 key qualities that participants felt the Shared Lives Team should possess are 'personable', 'good communication' and 'approachable staff'. Similarly 2 participants commented that they are really happy with the service that the Shared Lives Team provides, and they wish they had begun the assessment process sooner.

Seven out of the 14 participants commented that the Shared Lives Service provides a very rewarding scheme and a further 2 participants commented that they feel the assessment process works particularly well.

### Areas for improvement

When the participants asked if there was anything they felt could be improved upon, there seemed to be one clear response given as opposed to several negative experiences.

In general, it took a period of consideration before any responses were thought of. This contrasted with the positive aspects, which usually prompted responses immediately. This period of contemplation would suggest that they were not considered to be overriding issues in comparison to the perceived benefits of being a Shared Lives carer and were mainly related to promotion of the service, the length of the assessment process and clarity of information.

### Promotion of the service

When asked if there was anything else they would like to add that wasn't covered in the interview, 7 out of the 14 participants commented that they feel the service needs better promotion, both for carers and users of the service. This correlates with how the majority of participants first heard about the service, as only 2 had heard about it from an outside source- all other participants heard about the service through word of mouth or were already involved in the social care field through their occupation or foster placements.

There was also a general consensus that the service needs to be better promoted to potential service users. Four participants commented that it took too long following approval to host the first placement despite them being open to all types of placement. These participants experienced on average a five month wait for the first placement following approval. The participants felt this was due to a limited number of people accessing the service due to a lack of promotion. One participant who works in the health and social care field commented that there seemed to be a lack of knowledge of the service

amongst other professionals and as such, suitable opportunities for referral were being missed.

In terms of the different services that Shared Lives Service provides, there was a correlation between the areas participants live in and the information they received about the services they can offer. Two participants living in the Central area were unaware they can also provide support to older people, people with mental health issues and people recovering from alcohol and drug addiction. In contrast to this, all participants living in the North and East areas were aware of all the services they can provide.

### **Assessment process**

The majority of participants who live in North Lancashire felt that the process was too long. The majority of participants responded that the process took between 4-6+ months (10 participants).

For those who had felt the process took too long (8 participants), the process had taken 4-14 months to complete, with the exception of one participant where the process had taken 4 months to complete. For those who had felt the process length was 'about right' (6 participants), the process had taken 1-6 months to complete. It could be concluded from these interviews therefore that in general, participants feel that 6+ months is too long for the process to complete.

When asked for further comments on the length of the process three participants said they could see why this process would take so long and one participant said that it was worth the wait. Other comments suggest that the process was unnecessarily slowed down due to administration issues.

In terms of the content of the assessment process, the general consensus was that the questions asked were relevant, thorough and appropriate for the role. Some participants commented that this is how it should be for a service that is supporting vulnerable adults.

### **Communication channels**

The preferred communication channels amongst participants certainly seemed to be email and telephone. Many of those questioned felt that this would be the most effective way of contacting them with information. Similarly, many participants commented that face to face was their preferred communication channel for matters such as interviews and first contacts.

None of the participants preferred letters as a channel for communication and many commented that this channel is too slow, information can become lost.

## Clarity of information

Many of the negative experiences of the participants were due to a lack of clarity over information. Recurring issues were the payment system, insurance, the voucher system and self employment/tax. Participants commented on a lack of clear information in these areas and some suggested that some members of the Shared Lives Team were also unclear with these systems. Two participants felt they were unclear about what they should be paying for, and what the service user should be paying for.

## Overall conclusions

Overall it can be concluded that there are high levels of satisfaction amongst the carers who were interviewed. The relationship aspect between the carers and the Shared Lives team is highly valued. A recurring issue in the research is that the length of the assessment process is too slow. Given the option, the participants would change little about how the service is run throughout the assessment process, but would like to see it expanded through further promotion and would like access to clearer information.

## 4.1 Recommendations

- The lack of promotion of the service for potential carers was a clear recurring theme throughout the interviews. While there is some pre-existing promotional material for the service in the form of postcards and posters, it appears to be that the information is not being circulated widely enough outside of the health and social care setting. The service should look at ways in which the wider public can be made aware of the Shared Lives Service.
- The lack of promotion of the service for new service users was another recurring theme. It is recommended that the Shared Lives service reviews its information sharing systems with other professionals and services.
- As promotion and the need for information were two areas that were brought up frequently, it may be beneficial for details on the Shared Lives Service web page to be updated and expanded to include more in depth information on the different services Shared Lives offers, the support available and what to expect as a Shared Lives carer. This could be beneficial for both prospective and current carers.
- One issue that seemed to come up frequently was the lack of clarity surrounding the payment system, including when carers would be paid and a breakdown of the payment. As some participants commented that when clarity was sought on this they were passed around Shared Lives staff, it is recommended that the service either assigns a small number of staff member as a specialist for the payment system and to act as a point of contact for all issues on this subject, or to review the level of training and understanding all the staff have on this and increase the understanding where deemed necessary.
- There was a recurring theme surrounding the lack of clarity about the payment system, what carers should be paying for, insurance, the voucher system and self employment/tax. The service should look at providing an introduction pack for prospective carers. This would include detailed information on each of the above mentioned areas, as well as outlining what to expect as a Shared Lives Carer, as well as contacts for further support.
- As the length of time that the assessment process took was seen to be too long, it is recommended that the service looks to implement a system whereby applicant carers are contacted by the service on a monthly basis to update them on progress and for reassurance. This could also be adapted for approved carers who are awaiting placements.
- The service should request for each prospective carers' preferred channel of communication to ensure they are being reached most effectively.

# Agenda Item 6

## Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement

Meeting to be held on 16 April 2013

Electoral Division affected: All
-------------------------------------

### Lancashire Break Time

Contact for further information:

Sally J. Riley, (01772) 532713 Head of Inclusion and Disability Support Service,  
Directorate for Children and Young People, [sally.riley@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:sally.riley@lancashire.gov.uk)

#### Executive Summary

This report provides an update on progress of the *Lancashire Break Time*, the provision of short breaks for children and young people with disabilities and their families.

#### Recommendation

The Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement is asked to note the report and comment as appropriate.

### Background and Advice

In 2008, the Government launched a transformation programme for disabled children's services in England called *Aiming High for Disabled Children*. The vision behind *Aiming High for Disabled Children* was for all families with disabled children to have the support they need to live ordinary family lives, as a matter of course. There were several strands to the programme, one of which was the provision of a short breaks programme. This short breaks programme was targeted at specific groups of children with disabilities through what was known as the Full Service Offer.

The rationale behind this programme was that families with disabled children had told the Government that their number one priority was "for a regular and reliable break from caring". Children and young people with disabilities had also told them that they wanted "more things to do and more places to go".

The Aiming High for Disabled Children programme in Lancashire was very successful with approximately 1,600 families receiving short breaks commissioned from over 100 third sector providers in all parts of the county. However, at the end of March 2011, the *Aiming High for Disabled Children* programme came to an end as central Government funding ceased. Recognising the value of *Aiming High for Disabled Children*, Lancashire County Council committed to invest £3.5 million for each of two years to put in place a programme of short breaks to enable families of children and young people with disabilities in the

area to continue to benefit from a break from their caring role. In making the announcement the Cabinet Member for Children and Schools was clear that the decision on how this money should be spent should primarily be driven through parental consultation.

A group of parents/carers, supported by Lancashire County Council officers, established a sub-group of the Lancashire Parent Carer Forum to identify and deliver a range of short breaks across the twelve districts under the name of *Lancashire Break Time*.

The parents/carers involved in the development of the *Lancashire Break Time* programme have shown passion and commitment and genuine and unwavering desire to secure a programme of short breaks to benefit all families and children with disabilities in Lancashire.

One of the early decisions of the sub-group was to define who would benefit from the programme as it was universally agreed both here in Lancashire and in other local authorities that the criteria to access the *Aiming High for Disabled Children* programme was too restrictive and led to inequity in access to short break provision for children with different disabilities. It was felt particularly by parents that there was a need to ensure that no child with an additional need or disability would be disadvantaged. Thus, it was agreed that *Lancashire Break Time* would provide a non-assessed break via self-referral through the following criteria:

***“A child or young person who lives in Lancashire with disabilities or additional needs, aged 0 – 18 and who has difficulty accessing universal services.”***

During 2012/13 (data to 28 February 2013), *Lancashire Break Time* has delivered a short break for 1,980 children with disabilities and their families across Lancashire. This short break provision has been delivered across the twelve districts of Lancashire through commissioned agreements with 52 providers who have delivered in total 20,222 short breaks which have provided 100,425 hours of care.

The provision is broken down by districts as follows:

<b>District</b>	<b>No. of Short Breaks</b>	<b>No. of Hours Delivered</b>
Burnley	2,608	12,422
Chorley	1,842	8,154
Fylde	1,268	4,314
Hyndburn	864	3,977
Lancaster	1,931	12,769
Pendle	923	2,577
Preston	2,564	10,606
Ribble Valley	413	4,139
Rossendale	1,378	5,541

South Ribble	1,869	8,079
West Lancs	2,489	14,995
Wyre	2,073	12,852
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20,222</b>	<b>100,425</b>

These short breaks have been provided in a variety of ways and at various times throughout the year. The types of short break activities that have been delivered are highlighted by the following examples:

- Horse riding
- Swimming
- Youth club
- Bowling
- Gardening
- Construction club
- Arts and crafts
- Trampolining
- Climbing wall
- Dancing/Drama clubs
- Wheels for all
- Football sessions
- Sports Sessions
- Cookery sessions
- Cycling
- Life skills
- Rock climbing/ Zip wire
- Canoeing
- Orienteering
- Abseiling
- Fitness gym
- Multi-sports
- Badminton

These short break activities have been provided at a variety of times throughout the year at weekends, weekdays, and during school holidays. As well as providing short breaks during the daytime, *Lancashire Break Time* has also provided overnight short breaks provision. Information about *Lancashire Break Time* can be found via the Lancashire County Council website at <http://www3.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/web/?IDSS/38107>

In delivering some overnight short break provision *Lancashire Break Time* has been working in partnership with Lancashire County Council's Outdoor Education Centres over the course of the last year to develop their provision to ensure that children and young people with disabilities are able to fully access the facilities that these centres have to offer. As a result of this ongoing work *Lancashire Break Time* has commissioned, in partnership with third sector providers, a mixture of overnight short

breaks ranging from one overnight to a five night short break delivered via all four of the Outdoor Education Centres (Tower Wood, Hothersall Lodge, Borwick Hall and Whitehough). Proposals will be put forward later this year for further capital works to be undertaken at the Centres to make them even more accessible in delivering short breaks for children and young people with disabilities.

The figures that are provided are the hard statistics about the amount of provision that has been commissioned through *Lancashire Break Time*. What they don't reflect is the positive and powerful statements that have been made by parents, families and indeed the children themselves, about the benefit to them from receiving and having access to these short breaks.

At the Short Breaks Seminars which were held across the county in September 2012, there was a display of many of the comments received about *Lancashire Break Time* which exemplifies the positive difference that the programme makes to families. Some of the examples of many positive statements made by about *Lancashire Break Time* are:

*"After a break I am able to see her lovely personality, not how difficult her needs are"*

*"My child has visited places and experienced activities that we would never have considered"*

*"Before Lancashire Break Time we had no free time for ourselves"*

*"It's been great for our child with additional needs, our marriage and our other children too"*

*"Without the group my son would not have had the opportunity to make a friend who is "just like me"*

Whilst acknowledging that short breaks have been delivered to 1,980 individual children, and hence that number of parents/families have benefitted, the *Lancashire Break Time* sub group understand that there are other families that are not accessing a short break but may be eligible. There may be different reasons for this; they may not feel they need a break or the programme may not meet the families' needs or indeed they may be unaware that *Lancashire Break Time* is in place.

To reach out to as many families as possible and to put in place a programme of regular breaks the *Lancashire Break Time* sub group is looking to develop a pattern of breaks that would give confidence to families that they have a regular break from caring and that the children and young people themselves have regular and reliable access to a range of activities that enables them to develop friendships, undertake activities that they may not have the opportunity to do so otherwise and provides an element of normalisation of childhood.

Children and young people, who do not have additional needs and/or disabilities, enjoy and benefit from being able to undertake activities independent of their parents. Similarly, parents of children without disabilities or additional needs, have



the opportunity for their children to partake in activities with their peers (outside of the family unit) thus increasing their confidence and independence as individuals in the natural progression of development. The *Lancashire Break Time* sub-group holds the strong belief that we should strive for the same opportunity for children with additional needs and disabilities also - this is an added benefit to that of providing the parent/carer with a much needed break.

The *Lancashire Break Time* sub-group has worked extremely hard over the last two years to put in place a robust, effective system to identify and commission a programme of short breaks. There is strong support from parents and carers for it to continue and this was evident at all three of the Short Breaks Seminars held in the September 2012 and in the recent consultation on the Short Breaks Strategy where nine in ten parent/carers representing 91% of all respondents agreed that Lancashire Break Time should continue and be placed on a permanent footing with a dedicated budget. Members of the group are passionate about this agenda and wish to see it continue and evolve to continue and to better meet the needs of families and children and young people with disabilities and additional needs in Lancashire.

## **Consultations**

*Lancashire Break Time* has been delivered in consultation Lancashire Parent Carers Forum to ensure that the views of parents and cares are adequately reflected in the delivery of the provision. It has also featured in a recent consultation with interested parties on the Short Breaks Strategy for children with disabilities which put forward a number of recommendations for the future shape of provision and service delivery.

## **Implications:**

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

## **Risk management**

### ***Financial implications***

The 2012/13 budget for Lancashire Break Time short breaks is £3.5m. The current projected spend for the financial year is £3.0m, a forecast underspend of £0.5m.

### ***Legal implications***

The Short Break Services Statement, a requirement of The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011, sets out the range of services designed to meet parents' capacity to care for, or continue to care for, their disabled child. The County Council is required to commission these services, but is not required to provide those services directly.

Further, short breaks for children with disabilities will need to be compliant with the SEN and Disability reforms signalled in the draft legislation within the Children and Families Bill which is due to receive Royal Assent with implementation scheduled from April 2014.

### ***Equality and diversity***

S.149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the equality duty that public authorities must comply with. This duty requires the decision maker to have due regard to:

- the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other unlawful conduct under the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a "protected characteristic" and those who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

### **List of Background Papers**

<b>Paper</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Contact/Directorate/Tel</b>
Short Breaks Strategy for Children with Disabilities – Outcomes of a Consultation and Recommendations for Future Shape of Provision and Service delivery	18 March 2013	Sally J. Riley, Head of Inclusion and Disability Support Service, Directorate for Children and Young People 01772 532713

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate