

Lancashire County Council

Corporate Parenting Board

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 26th July, 2018 at 1.30 pm in
Committee Room 'C' (The Duke of Lancaster Room) - County Hall, Preston**

Present: Members

County Councillor Ian Brown - Lancashire County Council
Councillor Bernard Dawson - Lancashire County Council
Amanda Hatton - Director of Children's Services, LCC
Iqra - LINX Representative
Beth - LINX Representative
Tash - LINX Representative
Nathan - LINX Representative
Lee - LINX Representative
Brad - LINX Representative
Kris - LINX Representative

Co-opted members

Nicola Bamford - Designated Doctor and Consultant Paediatrician, representing CCG
Lorraine Moody - Barnardo's
Roxanne McAllister - Leaving Care, LCC
Dylan Williams - Barnardo's
Tracy Corban - Leaving Care, LCC
Rebecca King - Barnardo's

Other Attendees

Jane Hylton - Leaving Care, LCC
Barbara Bath - Fostering, Adoption, Residential and YOT Team, LCC
Tracy Corban - Leaving Care, LCC
Ralph Rushworth - LCC Apprentice
Aaron Walmsley- Fishwick - LCC Apprentice
Reece Hobin - LCC Apprentice
Dillan McLardy - LCC Apprentice
Lucy Parry - LCC Apprentice
Sam Gorton - Democratic Services, LCC

1. Welcome and Introductions

County Councillor Ian Brown welcomed everybody to the meeting especially Amanda Hatton.

County Councillor Ian Brown updated the Board that he is still liaising with Timpsons. Following a recent meeting with the Permanence and Corporate Parenting Board where County Councillor Ian Brown raised concerns as to why young people could not use their setting up home allowance to purchase items from the YMCA or British Heart Foundation stores, it was explained that the reasons why was due to procurement rules, however, officers would look at ways to amend the rules and feedback to the Corporate Parenting Board.

Action: Permanence and Corporate Parenting Board to report back to the Corporate Parenting Board on the setting up home allowance being viable for young people to spend at YMCA or British Heart Foundation stores.

The previous Chair of the Board Sue Pryn, had requested if two care leavers would be willing to talk to the Department of Work and Pensions with regards their experience with them. Dylan Williams agreed to liaise with County Councillor Ian Brown who would then inform Sue Pryn.

Action: Dylan Williams, Barnardo's to speak with County Councillor Ian Brown with regards two young people meeting with the Department for Work and Pensions.

Amanda Hatton thanked the young people from LINX for their well wishes during her recent absence and informed them it was good to be back.

The Corporate Parenting Strategy would be going to Cabinet in October and at the next meeting there would be a focus on the strategy and the local offer.

Action: Sam Gorton to ensure that the Corporate Parenting Strategy and the Local Offer was on the agenda for the meeting in September.

Following this brief update, County Councillor Brown then handed the meeting over to the young people and Barnardo's.

2. Become Policies

In the absence of the young person, this item would be carried forward to the next meeting in September.

Action: Barnardo's to ensure that the Become Policies item be added to the young people's element of the next Board meeting.

3. LINX Update

LINX presented the attached PowerPoint to the Board on all the activities they had been involved in since the last meeting in May 2018.

4. Activity - Transition from Social Worker to Personal Advisor

In groups the Board were asked to discuss what the transition from social worker to Personal Advisor should look like. Feedback from the groups is attached.

Young people also commented that:

They felt it was important for the Social Worker to introduce them to their Personal Advisor.

Pathways should start at 14 rather than 16 like they currently do.

A young person gave feedback on his experience and at 16 years of age he felt it was very rushed and also at that time he was dealing with a breakdown in placement, as well as GCSEs. His Personal Advisor was approaching retirement, so he would be getting a new one and would have to reiterate everything again. At 16 he did not want to engage. At 17 years of age, he met a new Personal Advisor who took the gentle approach with him and met in a neutral place and had a general chat and the Personal Advisor shared things about herself too, which made the young person feel comfortable and had stuck by him and he felt that this worked.

Young people agreed that there was no one way for transitioning as each young person are their own individual.

Young people were thanked for their frank and honest opinion on sharing their experiences with the Board.

Lorraine Moody agreed to take the feedback and use it when training new Social Workers at the Academy.

Action: LINX and Barnardo's to use the feedback when delivering training to new Social Workers at the Social Work Academy and for the Permanence and Corporate Parenting Board to action.

5. Young Inspectors Update

The Young Inspectors presented the attached PowerPoint to the Board.

Amanda Hatton requested that one of our residential homes be inspected.

Young Inspectors confirmed that they arranged their visits with the homes, however the Board felt that they should turn up just like other inspections that take place and not give prior warning.

A query was raised as to whether this could be rolled out to supported accommodation and Barnardo's agreed to take this to the next Care Leavers Forum for discussion and report back to the Board at the next meeting in September. Roxanne McAllister agreed to send details of supported accommodation contacts to Barnardo's.

- Action:**
- i) Young Inspectors to consider inspecting with prior arrangements.
 - ii) Amanda Hatton to send details to Dylan Williams on her request for a residential home to be inspected by the Young Inspectors.
 - iii) Young Inspectors/Barnardo's to discuss with the Care Leavers Forum the possibility of inspecting Supported Accommodation.
 - iv) Roxanne McAllister to forward details of supported accommodation contacts to Barnardo's.

6. Young People's Benchmarking Forum

Ralph Rushworth tabled a feedback report from the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum which is attached to the minutes. At the event questions were raised about access to care records and the support to understand them and deal with some of the emotions raised by reading them. Ralph asked the Board if the following questions could be discussed at the next Board meeting in September:

- i) What is the process for care leavers accessing records in your local authority?
- ii) What effect can accessing records have on care leavers and why is it important to have support in place?
- iii) Who provides support to care leavers around accessing in your local authority?
- iv) Is there enough training and awareness for staff – Leaving Care Team and partner organisations around care leavers accessing records?

The Board agreed that the questions could be discussed at the next meeting.

- Action:** Sam Gorton to ensure that there was an item on the next agenda to discuss the four questions as detailed above.

7. Care Leavers Local Offer

Dylan McLardy and Aaron Walmsley-Fishwick, LCC Apprentices, updated the Board on the Local Offer and what had been happening since the last meeting. A meeting had been held with the Communications Team to discuss the website and to categorise issues that Care Leavers face into 12 sections. The Board were asked to look at the attached list of categories and ensure they had captured everything. The Board felt that ASDAN – Preparing for Independence should appear on the list.

Care leavers were also asked to fill out the attached Personas which would be used to get a snapshot of the audience for the Local Offer, eg what type of device would they be using – phone, iPad, laptop, what type of information would they be searching for, and the responses would aid the Communications Team to develop a more young person friendly website for the Local Offer.

If there were any further updates, the Board were asked to contact Aaron or Dylan on the details provided on the document attached to the minutes.

8. Update from Care Leavers Forum

The following headings have arisen from the Care Leavers Forum for the attention of the Corporate Parenting Board. Members of the Board commented on issues raised.

Council Tax

Some Care Leavers had received letters from District Councils with regards non-payment of Council Tax. As Council Tax was now exempt for Care Leavers this had raised concerns. Roxanne McAllister informed the Board that there had been a communication error in the process and letters had been written to all District Councils to correct this.

Action: Roxanne McAllister agreed to follow this up and to ensure this had now been rectified.

Housing (Rent)/Universal Credit – Waiting List

Young people raised issues with regards housing benefit and that it was not being backdated and that they were expected to pay for rent up front.

This needed raising with Department for Work and Pensions.

Jane Hylton informed the Board that there was a piece of work being carried out by The Children's Society which still needed to go through Treasury to extend the single room rate from 22 years to 25 years old.

Young people felt that the Local Authority should pay up front and also forward to the Department for Work and Pensions regular information on young people who were turning 18 years of age within the next 10 weeks, this would then enable everything to be in place on the young person's 18th birthday, so they were not losing out.

Support for Single Parents

Feedback from young people was that they were not aware of anything available in the Central area on supporting single parents. This was something that came under the Children and Family Wellbeing Service and the Board felt that Debbie

Duffell, Head of Service, should be invited to a future meeting of the Board to raise awareness of support for single parents that was available.

Action: Sam Gorton to ensure this was added to the forward plan and raised at a future agenda setting meeting.

Pathway Plans

Young people asked if the wording on pathway plans did not refer to they/them, instead be more personalised ie he/she. Roxanne McAllister agreed to feedback to Personal Advisors and include in their training.

Action: Roxanne McAllister to request that personal wording was used on pathway plans and referred to young people as he/she not they/them by the Personal Advisors and include in training packages.

Contact between siblings

Some children in care felt that they were being punished if they were not allowed to have contact with siblings. If there was a reason as to why contact was not allowed, then this should be explained, so they can understand why. This needs be raised at the Social Worker Academy, and with Social Workers that answers need explaining to the young people.

Action: To include in training at the Social Work Academy that young people need to be given a reason if sibling contact is not allowed and explained to them so they understand.

9. Activity - Mental Health

It was agreed that this item be deferred to the next Board meeting in September.

Action: Barnardo's to ensure that the Mental Health activity be added to the young people's element of the next Board meeting.

10. Last 12 months Update

Young people updated the Board on two big activities that took place in the last 12 months at the Corporate Parenting Board.

Taking Young People Out of School Lessons for Meetings

Young people raised the issue about being taken out of lessons at school for meetings by Independent Reviewing Officers/Social Workers and that they were unhappy with this as they felt they were missing out on education and that they were being singled out and made to feel different to other pupils in the classroom. An activity was carried out at the Corporate Parenting Board meeting on 25 January 2018, where young people presented a quiz and whilst this was

happening, members of the Board were removed from the room, then brought back in, then were engaged in conversation with other young people who wanted to know where they had been and what for.

Following this activity, Amanda Hatton wrote to all Social Workers and Independent Reviewing Officers, asking them to avoid meeting with young people in school time and removing them from lessons.

Feedback from the young people was that this had now stopped and young people were not removed from lessons.

Young people were reminded that if this started to happen again, then they should raise it as soon as possible.

Care Leavers Sanctions

At the Corporate Parenting Board meeting on 27 July 2017, a representative from the Department of Work and Pensions attended and the young people carried out an activity and also raised concerns with regards benefit sanctions. Following this meeting, the Department for Work and Pensions had worked closely with Lancashire County Council and Barnardo's to support Care Leavers and Dylan Williams reported that they had been liaising with Barnardo's on a regular basis to ensure that the young people had no issues.

11. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting will take place on Wednesday, 26 September 2018 at 6.00pm in Committee Room 'C', County Hall, Preston, PR1 8RJ.

County Councillor Ian Brown thanked the young people for their hard work in chairing and presenting the meeting.