

Lancashire County Council

Corporate Parenting Board

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 28th March, 2019 at 6.00 pm in
Committee Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston**

Present: Members

County Councillor Ian Brown - Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Stephen Clarke - Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Julie Gibson - Lancashire County Council
Catherine - representing Adoption
Marieta Birt - Fostering Forum
Nicole - LINX Representative
Bradley - LINX Representative
Iqra - LINX Representative
Michelle - LINX Representative
Mark - LINX Representative
Kris - LINX Representative

Co-opted members

Caroline Waldron - Safeguarding and Looked After Children,
East Lancs CCG and BwD CCG
Amanda Mansfield - Independent Reviewing Officers
Rachel Blundell - Policy, Information and Commissioning
(Start Well)
Stephen Young - Corporate Management Team, Lancashire
County Council
Mia Leyland - Barnardo's
Angela Epps - Fostering Providers

Other Attendees

Barbara Bath - Fostering, Adoption, Residential and YOT
Team, LCC
Jane Hylton - Leaving Care, LCC
Sam Gorton - Democratic Services, LCC
Dave Carr - Policy, Information and Commissioning
(Start Well)

1. Introductions and Apologies

All were welcomed to the meeting and apologies were received and noted from County Councillor Phillippa Williamson, Jeanette Woods, Tracey Ellemore and Neil Kelly.

County Councillor Ian Brown welcomed Angela Epps who was representing Fostering Providers, to her first meeting of a 12 month term. Angela would be replacing Michelle Davies.

Jeanette Woods was also the new member from the Residential Providers for a 12 month term and was replacing Karen Buckley.

2. Notes of the Meeting and Matters Arising from 23 January 2019

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 January 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

County Councillor Ian Brown informed the Board that he had attended a Secure Review.

Following on from the last meeting County Councillor Ian Brown confirmed that the Care Leaver Covenant had now been signed off by the Council and this should now enable information to be shared with the Department for Work and Pensions on care leavers which should enable the correct information on entitlements and benefits to be given to them on their initial visit.

Barbara Bath also updated the Board that she had once again met with Ralph Rushworth with regards access to records. Barbara confirmed that the policy had been updated.

3. Getting to Good Plan

Barbara Bath presented the Getting to Good Plan to the Board and informed them that this would now be a standing item on the agenda.

In 2015 Ofsted inspection rated the overall children's service provision to be inadequate. In 2018 the judgement was that services were no longer inadequate, but required improvements to be good. The Adoption Services was judged to be good. Ofsted found that staff were positive, open to learning and committed to their work with children and families. The service knows itself well and appropriate action was in place to improve services and that multi-agency strategic partnerships were stronger leading to a more shared approach.

There was still more to do to ensure that all children received a consistently good service. In total, Ofsted made 11 recommendations which needed to continue to strengthen and improve practice. They were categorised in six key areas:

- Effective Partnership Working
- Prevention
- Purposeful Practice
- Permanence and Children in Our Care
- Effective Use of Performance Data
- Workforce Development

The 11 recommendations were RAG rated and are monitored monthly by Senior Management Team.

The role that the Corporate Parenting Board had as part of the plan was to provide an oversight and scrutiny of permanence and corporate parenting delivery.

The Board sits within the Governance structure which was detailed on page 37 of the agenda and supporting documents.

The Corporate Parenting Board action plan which would be discussed later in this meeting would also form part of the plan by populating and feeding back what it had been doing as a Board.

4. LINX - Housing Activities

Prior to the meeting, LINX were asked to find out what each of the district councils offered care leavers with regards to accommodation and support. Their results are attached.

Members of the Board then looked at the findings and raised questions as follows:

What is the District Local Housing Association offering – application for housing? (West Lancs)

What was the District Local Housing Association offering? (Pendle)

What's District Housing offering? (Fylde)

Capacity – how many beds/rooms? (Fylde)

How difficult is it to secure tenancies when moving on? (Lancaster)

The young people did not have this information.

The aim of this activity was to see what was available on the Districts and Housing Associations websites and what they were offering, which would then determine the Chair and Lead Officer of the Board to make a decision as to which Districts needed to be targeted with regards what they were offering young people and how useful young people found information when looking for what they offered care leavers with regards accommodation. This would then inform the Board as to what the next steps in the process would be, ie initiate a separate meeting with leads from the District Councils, or write a letter from the Board requesting information and what information the young people would like to see on their websites and available to them.

The young people reported that they found Fylde and Wyre to be good with regards information on supported accommodation online and that it was quite a supportive website.

Rachel Blundell informed the Board that each District took a different approach to a young person prior to 18 requiring accommodation and this was something that this Board could take forward to ensure that if a young person wanted to move to independent living at 16 they could do. Rachel agreed to speak with Legal Services at Lancashire County Council regarding this.

Resolved: That Rachel Blundell would speak to Legal Services, Lancashire County Council to explore if/how we as a Council could put anything in place that would enable a young person under the age of 18 to secure independent accommodation.

With regards housing providers they will only support Care Leavers from 21-25 years of age. Some accommodation is unsuitable with mould and damp, away from transport links, in unsuitable areas and would only support care leavers up to 25 years of age. Identification was also required when securing accommodation with a provider and some care leavers do not have this.

One young person raised an issue around mould and damp in accommodation and Dave Carr agreed to speak to that young person outside the meeting.

Finally with regards Post 18 Pathway Plans a discussion took place as to how young people could be more involved with them. The pathway plans were done to ensure that final reviews were completed and this was a compulsory review. Some young people spoke and highlighted that in some cases this was not happening. There were systems in place and as this was not happening as reported by the young people, Barbara Bath agreed to report back to the Senior Management Team regarding this and would feedback to a future meeting.

Resolved: That Barbara Bath would highlight to Senior Management Team that it had been reported that final reviews were not always taking place even though there were systems in place and would report back to a future Corporate Parenting Board on this.

Young Inspectors

The Young Inspectors had carried out six inspections at Barnardo's Supported Accommodations since the last Corporate Parenting Board meeting.

Feedback from the inspections were shared with members of the Board and recommendations given to the accommodations and progress of them would be feedback to this meeting in July.

5. What would the Board want from District Councils on Housing and Suitable Accommodation

Barbara Bath informed the Board that the issue with accommodation was a very complexed one, especially due to the fact that there were 12 district councils and multiple housing providers.

The Board were asked to identify what:

We as a Board want to know from the District Councils?

We as a Board want provided for our Care Leavers

Feedback from the groupwork is attached.

From this information, Barbara Bath and County Councillor Ian Brown will produce a letter on behalf of the Board asking the housing associations and district councils what the Board want to know for our Care Leavers. Following the districts/housing associations responses, this will then determine the next course of action for the Board.

Resolved: Barbara Bath and County Councillor Ian Brown will compose a letter from the groupwork feedback to the housing associations and district councils on what we as a Board want from them for our Care Leavers.

6. Current Activity

Rachel Blundell and Dave Carr from Policy, Information and Commissioning Team (Start Well), Lancashire County Council, presented a report on supported accommodation for care leavers. The County Council currently supported a range of accommodation for homeless young people and care leavers and recognised that there was more that was needed to be done to improve the quality and range of accommodation available and to ensure that the support on offer helped to improve outcomes.

An overview was given on 16 years and above Supported Accommodation Services and the presentation given is attached. An audit of 11 cases had taken place and the results were presented. It was not a great picture however, some of the decisions could well be through choice of that young person. There were concerns around mental health, missing from home and child sexual exploitation.

There were some very good supported accommodation providers in Lancashire, but services were not regulated by Ofsted.

The County Council under its' Sufficiency Duty must ensure that there was sufficient suitable and appropriate accommodation to meet the needs of our Children Looked After and Care Leavers.

The Board noted the key objectives for the Council when placing our young people in supported accommodation and also detailed block contracts which were staffed 24 hours and the highest priority access was given to 16 and 17 year olds and other current supported accommodation services.

As part of the commission, a consultation took place online and in addition, met with young people in different settings to get feedback on supported accommodation. Key findings were detailed in the presentation and young people will continue to be involved in the planning of service provision.

The Board were updated on the new arrangements and what would be different and under the new arrangements it would give a better oversight and ability to look at the quality and provision of housing.

Resolved: That the Board noted the current plans to recommission provision and to comment on and to inform plans for a wider strategic view.

7. Corporate Parenting Board Action Plan

As part of the Corporate Parenting Strategy, there were nine objectives agreed that this Board would focus from January to September 2019. The work plan detailing these are attached to the minutes.

The action plan that was circulated with the agenda was a working document and would be pre-populated following each meeting, so feedback can be provided for each strategy and this would help to measure outcomes and detail progress being made.

On the work plan there was the voice of the young person at every meeting.

If there is anything else that should be included in the action plan, then please let Sam Gorton email sam.gorton@lancashire.gov.uk know.

8. Any Other Business

Young Person Board Meeting – 24 July 2019

The Board were informed that this meeting would now be held at Hothersall Lodge. Further details would be circulated shortly.

PROUD Awards

Those that had been invited to the PROUD Awards – Celebration Event for Children Looked After and Care Leavers had all been notified and an update from the event would be given at the next Board meeting in May 2019.

Resolved: Gavin Redhead would feedback on the event at the Board meeting in May 2019.

TACT – Language that Cares

Prior to the meeting the TACT – Language that Cares document was circulated to the Board. Caroline Waldron, Safeguarding and Looked After Children, East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group and Blackburn with Darwen Clinical Commissioning Group discussed the document with the Board to see if it would be suitable for Lancashire and received their views on it which were as an Authority it would be quite difficult to adopt some of the language, however, would look at using some it.

LINX agreed to discuss it further outside the meeting and feedback to Caroline.

Resolved: That LINX discuss the TACT – Language that Cares document and feedback to Caroline Waldron.

9. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The date and time of the next meeting was:

Wednesday, 22 May 2019 at 6.00pm in Committee Room 'D' – Henry Bolingbroke Room, County Hall, Preston, PR1 8RJ.