

Lancashire County Council

Corporate Parenting Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 30th January, 2020 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 David Foxcroft	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Jayne Rear	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Julie Gibson	- Lancashire County Council
Marieta Birt	- Fostering Forum
Liz Donnelly Nelson	- Adoption
Barbara Bath	- Fostering, Adoption, Residential and YOT Team, LCC
Natasha	- LINX Representative
Jake	- LINX Representative
Charlotte	- LINX Representative
Iqra	- LINX Representative
Kris	- LINX Representative

Co-opted members

Audrey Swann	- Headteacher, Vulnerable and Looked After Children
Amanda Mansfield	- Independent Reviewing Officers
Roxanne McAllister	- Leaving Care, LCC
Lynda Pearson	- Leaving Care, LCC
Mia Leyland	- Barnardo's
Natasha Wright	- Barnardo's
Judith Gault	- Child and Family Wellbeing Service
Jane Hylton	- Leaving Care, LCC
Kirsty Clarke	- National Youth Advocacy Service
Jane Jones	- Clinical Commissioning Groups

Other Attendees

Sam Gorton	- Democratic Services, LCC
Umer Khonat	- Business Intelligence, LCC
Sharon Hubber	- Director of Children's Social Care, LCC
Laura Sales	- Director of Corporate Services, LCC

1. Introductions and Apologies

All were welcomed to the meeting and apologies were received from County Councillor Stephen Clarke, Angela Epps, Stephen Young and Tracey Ellmore.

Laura Sales, Director of Corporate Services was also in attendance as well as Sharon Hubber, Director of Children's Social Care.

2. Notes of the Meeting and Matters Arising from 26 November 2019

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and there were no matters arising from them.

3. Lancashire Safeguarding Model

Sharon Hubber, Director of Children's Social Care gave a brief outline on how work on the implementation of the Lancashire Safeguarding Model, which was due to go 'live' in Lancashire on 1 October 2020 was progressing. Walsall Council's project was currently 'live' and intelligence informed Lancashire that referrals for child protection plans were dropping considerably as they strengthened their family support. This is the result that Lancashire would wish to see when they implemented the Family Safeguarding Model.

As from April 2020, an experienced practitioner and their support team from Hertfordshire County Council would be on site working with Sharon and her team in Children's Social Care. A Department for Education Civil Servant Project minder would also be working with Edwina Grant OBE, Executive Director of Education and Children's Services and a senior researcher to look at "what works for children's social care".

The Board were briefed on the descriptors behind the Hertfordshire Model which were as follows:

- Changing Child Protection to keep more children safely within their families.
Changing our behaviour with families so they too can change their behaviour and accept support on offer.
- Multi-agency Teams working together to support children and parents.
Multi-agency teams tackling domestic abuse, parental mental health and substance misuse to improve children's lives.
- Motivational Interviewing: Working with resistance and developing family strengths.
A new approach to social work that creates sustainable behavioural change in parents so that children can remain safely at home.
- Family Safeguarding Work: Freeing up Practitioners to spend more time with families.
Reducing bureaucracy, guiding intervention, multi-agency recording, making social work a doable job.

Lancashire's descriptors so far were:

- Lancashire family safeguarding: supporting families to succeed in Lancashire.
- Linked to our vision for Education and Children's Services in Lancashire: *'Children, young people and their families are safe, healthy and achieve their full potential'*
- Lancashire also need to develop a common narrative, which is currently being worked on.

The Board were reminded as to why Lancashire needed to adopt this new way of working and by doing that, it would enable:

- More time with families and a whole family response.
- Keeping more high risk families together by reducing physical and emotional harm.
- Improving health and education outcomes for children.
- Strengthening of information sharing.
- Provision of high quality services at lower cost.
- Caseloads of fifteen provide for real social work.

Things that would be different were detailed as follows:

- Current social workers would cover Children in Need, Child Protection, Children Looked After and leaving care.
- Lancashire Family Safeguarding – would define teams where safeguarding was identified.
- There would be more focus on domestic abuse, alcohol or drug problems or mental health.
- Work as multi-disciplinary teams.
- Separately, focus on the 2000 plus children looked after and young people leaving care.
- Contextual safeguarding which was not family safeguarding.

The Board were informed of what would be happening between January and April 2020 on this project, which were as follows:

- Two appointments had already been agreed: A Systems Lead Officer to ensure the family safeguarding workbook and a Policy and Practice Officer.
- The Lead Head of Service has been appointed.
- A Communications post was currently being advertised.
- The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub review was to be completed and threshold document re-launched.
- Response to contextual safeguarding grounded so that it supported this work but had a separate focus.
- Need to focus on early help “we are all early help workers now”.
- Begin to recruit the adult workers.
- Link with the Violence Reduction Unit work and other work such as Adverse Childhood Experiences.
- Organisational Development strategy.

- Motivational interviewing.

Young people asked whether what was happening with the Government and cutbacks would have an effect on this project and it was confirmed that the money had been agreed to carry the project out.

The Board commented that there were too many systems and procedures which the Board had previously raised and learning that there was now to be one system for all was pleasing to note.

The Board were also informed that there was to be a separate functionality for the Leaving Care Service and the Head of Service for Leaving Care would be asked to attend future meetings of Corporate Parenting Board. There would also be discussion in the near future with care leavers to ask for their views on what they would expect a care leaving service to provide.

Health providers in attendance at the meeting also welcomed the drive to work together to support young people and their families.

Sharon was thanked for her presentation and update to the Board.

Resolved: That the Board noted the information and would receive further updates as the Lancashire Safeguarding Model work moved forward.

4. Future Corporate Parenting Board Meetings

Barbara Bath, Head of Service, Fostering, Adoption, Residential and Youth Offending Services and Laura Sales, Director for Corporate Services led the discussion on how the Corporate Parenting Board could be improved and that it ensured it was delivering statutorily what was requested of the Board.

Members looked at the Terms of Reference, focusing on the main functions and purposes of the Board and whether this Board was fulfilling those main functions and if not, how it could achieve them. Young people also felt that the Terms of Reference should be revamped into a young person friendly version for the whole Board to adhere to. This was also an opportunity to see how other Corporate Parenting Boards were operating in other Local Authorities and how the Board continued and improved how it listened to our young people's voices and ensured that their voices were heard across the Authority.

Discussion ensued as to whether the relevant partners were around the table to enable the Board to achieve its function and also whether young people felt that they needed to be present for the whole meeting, look at having alternate meetings with young people present, or maybe attend for half of the meeting going forward. Young people were also reminded that they were representing the voice of all children in care and care leavers and that this was something else that needed to be reviewed on how this was being achieved.

The Board also felt that there needed to be a mechanism to share its' work with the rest of the Council's corporate parents on what the Board was actually achieving, ie through Full Council and other related meetings.

In order for progress to be made on improving the functionality of the Board and to ensure it fulfils its responsibilities, it was agreed that there would be a Corporate Parenting Board Development Day. The session would be led by the Council's Learning and Development Service and a request was made to all Board members to attend so that ideas and discussions on improving the way the Board worked could be carried out effectively going forward.

Resolved: That a date be set for the Corporate Parenting Board Development Day at the soonest opportunity and that all members be invited to attend.

5. Lancashire County Council's Foster Carers' Charter

Barbara Bath, Head of Fostering, Adoption, Residential and Youth Offending Team updated the Board on Lancashire County Council's Foster Carers' Charter which represents the commitment of the Local Authority in its role as a Corporate Parent. The Charter was introduced by the Government in 2011 with principles for the child/children, local authorities and fostering services and also foster carers. Lancashire's first Charter was developed in 2011 and has been updated periodically since. The Board were presented with the latest updated version for information and comment.

It was suggested that there should be details included in the Charter around an expectation for a young person who goes beyond 18 on "Staying Put" arrangements or permanence. Barbara agreed to look at including wording for flexibility.

The Fostering Annual Report with all the facts and figures would be presented to the Board at a future meeting. Lancashire's Children in Care Council would have access to the report and they should dissect the report with Barnardo's, in their forums and bring questions back to the Board on behalf of all the children in care across Lancashire.

Resolved: That the Board members reviewed and noted Lancashire County Council's Foster Carers' Charter and that Barbara Bath would consider amending the Charter following the Boards comments.

6. Children in Care and Care Leavers Performance Information

Umer Khonat, Intelligence Analyst, presented the Children's Services Performance update for December 2019.

A heat map was presented to the Board which was full of useful statistics that the Board can utilise and challenge services if required. The heat map showed information relating to assessments, contacts and referrals, Section 47s, Children

in Need, Child Protection, Children Looked After, Care Leavers and adoption information. This data was also presented to Ofsted and the thresholds contained within it had been agreed by management and were comparators with our North West neighbours and England. Information was broken down by districts and information was presented in a way that highlighted the positive elements and also the pinch points and again this could be seen clearly within the districts in what was working well and maybe what was not working so well and needed to be challenged and good practice shared amongst districts. Data quality meetings were also held and Heads of Service in Children's Services come together with the Director of Children's Services to try to prevent any blockages in the system and to ensure that areas that were showing as amber, work progressed to ensure they did not run into issues and become red on the RAG rating system.

There is also a new data tool that will make the findings more interactive and this is called PowerBi. Umer agreed to demonstrate this new tool at a future meeting.

It was reported that as at December 2019 Lancashire was good at the following:

Re-referrals

Re-referral rate 20.1% - December 2019.

Assessments

Timeliness – 6 month rate 85% (on par with national rate), improvement from 78% in 2017/18. December performance 87%.

Children Protection Plans

1007 (40.3 per 10,000), reduced from 1329 since December 2018, the rate now remains below the regional (56.5) and statistical neighbour (48.3) and the national averages (43.7 per 10,000).

Children Looked After

Short term placement stability – 7.8%.

Visits in Timescale – 87%.

Repeat Children Looked After - 9%.

Number of Children Looked After placed over 20 miles from home outside the local authority boundary – 11%.

Placements

Increase in Fostering to 61.7%.

Reduction in Supported accommodation to 6.8%.

Care Leavers

In Suitable Accommodation (19-21 Years) – 89.9%.

Private Fostering

Visits within timescale– 63%.

Caseloads

Average caseload – 16.7 for all social workers (November 2019).

Highlighted below were the areas that Lancashire needed to improve/challenge on as of December 2019:

Section 47/Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC)

Section 47/Initial Child Protection Conferences within timescale - 62%.

Children in Need (CiN)

Visits within timescale – 59%.

Child Protection (CP)

Visits within timescale – 81%.

Repeat Child Protections in 12 months (7.4%) and ever (26%) - off target.

Children Looked After (CLA)

Rate of Children Looked After per 10,000 – 84.5.

Children Looked After with an up to date Personal Education Plan – 79.2%.

Health Assessments performance - 78.3%.

Dental Assessments performance - 69.5%.

Missing episodes interview completed within 3 days – 54.6% (improved from 44.8% since October 18).

Strengths and Difficulty Questionnaire (SDQ)

No Strengths and Difficulty Questionnaire – 315.

Care Leavers

Care leavers in Education, Employment or Training – 44.8%.

Care leavers in Contact (last two months) – 74.2%.

Following the presentation from Umer the Board agreed that at its' Development Day they would discuss further what data the Board expects to receive at each meeting and some that is required on an ad hoc basis. Other areas could be deep dives and more focussed pieces of work with the right people around the table to lead on the discussions, however, not required to attend every meeting.

It was noted that one piece of data was a cause for concern and this was the 55.2% of care leavers that were not in employment, training or education. As a Board this was something that needed a bigger discussion and more information to understand the data further and seek assurances from the Service as to what was being done to improve this outcome and was there anything the Board could do to support this. Again this was something that needed to be discussed at the Development Day to ensure it was on the future work plan.

Resolved: That the Board discussed and commented on the information presented and agreed the content of future performance information provided to subsequent meetings be discussed further at the Corporate Parenting Board Development Day.

7. Adoption Panel Report

Barbara Bath, Head of Fostering, Adoption, Residential and Youth Offending Team presented the Board with the Adoption Panel report which summarised the work of Lancashire County Council's Adoption Panel over the six month period from 1 April 2019 to 30 September 2019. Lancashire Adoption Panels were joint panels which meant that they composed of both adoption and fostering items. The report before the Board however, considered just the adoption items.

The report which was circulated with the agenda, included the number, type and age of the children awaiting an adoptive placement and length of time they had been waiting; the agency's performance against the timescales set out for the two-stage process; progress in the recruitment of suitable adoptive families; the number of children placed for adoption and adopted since the last report; and the number of children whose placement had disrupted or where there had been a change of plan and the child was no longer placed for adoption. The Board were informed that there had been no disruptions presented to the panel during the last 18 months, which was pleasing to note.

The Board also received details, that Lancashire were above average in terms of the time taken between a child entering care and moving into an adoptive family, however, below average in terms of time taken between receiving authority to place and deciding on a match against national figures.

Resolved: That the Board members reviewed and noted Lancashire County Council's Adoption Panel report.

8. Corporate Parenting Strategy Delivery Plan

This item was deferred to the Corporate Parenting Board Development Day.

9. Any Other Business

There were no items of urgent business received.

10. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting is Wednesday, 25 March 2020 at 6.00pm in Committee Room 'C' – Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston, PR1 0LD. This date however may change due to the Corporate Parenting Development Day. Members would be informed as soon as the Development Day had been finalised.