

Lancashire County Council

Corporate Parenting Board

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 24th November, 2020 at 6.00 pm in
Zoom Virtual Meeting - Zoom**

Present: Members

County Councillor Ian Brown	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Stephen Clarke	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor David Foxcroft	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Jayne Rear	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Julie Gibson	- Lancashire County Council
Barbara Bath	- Fostering, Adoption, Residential and YOT Team, LCC
Georgia	- LINX Representative
Callum	- LINX Representative
Jake	- LINX Representative
Natasha C	- LINX Representative
Kris	- LINX Representative

Co-opted members

Brendan Lee	- Children's Social Care, LCC
Caroline Waldron	- Clinical Commissioning Groups
Audrey Swann	- Headteacher, Vulnerable and Looked After Children, LCC
Amanda Mansfield	- Independent Reviewing Service, LCC
Roxanne McAllister	- Leaving Care, LCC
Stephen Young	- Corporate Management Team, LCC
Mia Leyland	- Barnardo's
Judith Gault	- Child and Family Wellbeing Service, LCC

Other Attendees

Umer Khonat	- Business Intelligence Team, LCC
Jane Hylton	- Leaving Care, LCC
Kirsty Clarke	- National Youth Advocacy Service
Sam Gorton	- Democratic Services, LCC
Maureen Huddleston	- Clinical Commissioning Groups
Cathy Trengove	- Barnardo's

1. Introductions and Apologies

All were welcomed to the meeting and apologies were received from David Barrow, Tracy Smith, Dr Nicola Bamford, Terri Crossland and Lynda Pearson.

2. Notes of the Meeting and Matters Arising from 10 September 2020

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

3. Care Leaver Housing Report

Sarah Jones, Policy Development Officer, Policy, Information and Commissioning (Start Well), Lancashire County Council provided a brief update on the Supported Accommodations Services – commissioning arrangements and the Joint Housing Protocol including the refreshed 16/17 Homeless Protocol and Roxanne McAllister, Children Social Care Team Manager, Child Protection/Children in Need Family Safeguarding, Lancashire County Council outlined the new Care Leaver Housing Protocol. Further details can be found in the [report](#) that was attached to the agenda.

In terms of the Supported Accommodation Services – commissioning arrangements, the Invitation to Tender for services was published in May 2019. A significant number of providers across the private and Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) have been successful at selection criteria stage 1, which will allow them to bid towards mini-competitions for service contracts. COVID-19 implications have delayed the next stage of the procurement process and consequently direct awards have been issued to block-contract providers so that service contracts continue until September 2021, by which time it is anticipated that the new contracts will be in place. Other services will continue to be commissioned via the regional system during that timeframe. A further update once the re-tendering process is nearing completion will be brought to a future Board meeting for its views and considerations.

The Joint Housing Protocol has been in place since 2016 and is generally working well across the County. As part of that, there is an overarching protocol with specialist areas for 16/17 homeless young people and within that protocol there is also information on what to do for emergency presentations, throughput for young people leaving care into supported accommodation and then into independent living. Work has been carried out alongside district housing partners to ensure they are also invested. There has been a lot of legislative changes recently, particularly around the Homeless Reduction Act and also support for care leavers. The new legislation will change how things are being done currently and the refresh to the protocol is also going to introduce a more robust way of preventing homelessness particularly 16/17 year olds, working with the Advocacy Service, Family Group Conferencing Service as well as the Child and Family Wellbeing Service to ensure there is a more even distribution of prevention services across Lancashire and also working alongside Third Sector partners.

Roxanne McAllister provided an update on the Care Leaver Protocol which is currently being drafted and will create some specific housing pathways for Care Leavers. There has been Joint Housing Protocol's in the past with single Districts, however the intention is to have a single protocol across the County. Work has been carried out with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on the Rough Sleepers Initiative and there are now two Housing Officers in post who will form part of the protocol. Consultations have been carried out with the Districts and the housing providers to explore issues that are frequently found when accommodating young people. The new protocol will focus on priority banding, access to social housing, discretionary housing payments which had previously been raised by a young person at a recent Board meeting, in terms of employment and what allowances should be made and this will also be included in the protocol. Following completion of this piece of work, it will then be presented to the Districts for them to agree and sign off that their offer is agreed and it will be presented to the Corporate Parenting Board for it to be approved and then rolled out across the County, which should then improve the situation around housing for Lancashire's young people. If there were to be some challenge back from the Districts then this is something that the Corporate Parenting Board could look to step in and speak with Districts at a more senior level. It is the role of the Board to take this initiative forward and share it with contacts in the Districts to help support and deliver the housing protocol.

Following discussion it was agreed:

- Resolved:**
- i) That a meeting be held with District Housing representatives in the New Year and that County Councillor Brown meet with Sharon Hubber, Brendan Lee and Sam Gorton to arrange this.
 - ii) That a table to be drawn up by Roxanne McAllister for all Districts, detailing what they have agreed to offer, which will then highlight those Districts where more pressure is required.
 - iii) That any issues on the Care Leavers Housing Protocol be alerted to the Board as and when they arise alongside.
 - iv) A further update once the re-tendering process for the Supported Accommodation Services – Commissioning Arrangements is nearing completion to be brought to a future Board meeting for its views and considerations.

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

Housing

In preparation for this meeting, young people had been asked an open question regarding housing and what they felt they needed, to have suitable housing. Following their responses, these were summarised as:

- Support with practical skills such as budgeting, simple household fixes such as boiler pressure, changing plugs or simple plumbing fixes.
- Someone to call when there is an emergency.
- Properties that are at an acceptable liveable standard and help with making it their own such as decorating and buying furniture and other "homely" items.
- Close to family, friends and support networks.
- Mental Health support and practical ideas to cope with isolation.
- Routine of how to take care of a home such as a cleaning schedule.

Following the presentation, young people commented:

- That maybe some work could be carried out with local Youth Zones on delivering a crash course of life skills.
- Receive help to undertake the ASDAN course, not necessarily in their own placements.
- Have care experienced young people share their experiences with other care leavers on life skills.

Jane Hylton commented that a 10 week ASDAN course (14-16 year olds) was coming to an end and had been delivered virtually via Zoom. A new course would be starting in the New Year and commented that the Service is always looking for young people to help deliver this course. If any of the young people were interested, please contact Jane Hylton, (jane.hylton@lancashire.gov.uk).

Discussion on 24 hour support was raised and this is something that needs to be put in place and further discussion needs to be had as to whether the Residential Units or Support Units can be that point of call in case of a burst water pipe, etc.

- Resolved:**
- i) That Judith Gault would feedback to Kathy Ashworth, Project Lead Manager, Child and Family Wellbeing Service on the suggestion of delivering life skills courses in Youth Zone and will report back to the Board on the findings.
 - ii) 24 hour support for young people in case of emergencies ie burst water pipes, heating issues etc needs discussing further within the Service as it is a pertinent issue and to target this support at the young people who do not have close links to residential homes/foster carers.

Criminalisation of Children in Care

A [case study](#) from a Care Leaver detailing their experience of criminalisation whilst in care, the impact it had, how the experience affected their relationship with the Police and what the young person could have done differently, had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Young people also accounted different experiences they had had when in care and it was common that the Police had been called at different times, when in family life it would have been dealt with, without calling the Police. They also commented how this can have an adverse effect between staff and the young people and instead of talking to the young person about the consequences, why they are acting like they are and taking into consideration their mental health issues, they felt that the staff just called the Police.

Carolyn Entwistle, Senior Manager, Child and Youth Justice Team confirmed that there was a protocol in place, however there is still a lot of work to do and will be detailed at agenda item 5, on dealing with issues in Residential Homes and that there is a ten point checklist that the Crown Prosecution Service use with Children Looked After and the Polices' response should be one of diversion and preventing criminalisation of Children Looked After.

Resolved: That a Police Representative should be a member of the Corporate Parenting Board which would allow conversations and enable the Police Force to think about its' actions in cases and situations they deal with when they are called and to also listen to the voice of the young people on the Board about their experiences. Sharon Hubber, Director of Children's Services, Lancashire County Council would follow up representation from the Police at future Board meetings and also how the Corporate Parenting Board can strengthen its' links with the Youth Justice Board.

5. In Care out of Trouble

Carolyn Entwistle, Senior Manager, Hannah Blower, Team Manager and Michael Nunn, Senior Manager, Fostering, Adoption, Residential and Child and Youth Justice Services were welcomed to the meeting to raise awareness of the statutory guidance and agencies responsibilities in the reduction of criminalisation of children looked after and care leavers. The Board were also updated with Lancashire's response to the statutory guidance and to have a shared understanding of the impact of the criminalisation of children and strategies in place to divert and prevent criminalisation of children looked after and care leavers.

Carolyn Entwistle outlined that within the service there are three principles:

- i) Take a child first approach
- ii) A trauma informed Service
- i) Take a restorative approach

Detailed in the [presentation](#) was some background as to what the In Care and Out of Trouble agenda is. As of 4 November 2020 children looked after open to Lancashire's Child and Youth Justice Service is 58 (27%) of the caseload including out of area children. Lancashire children looked after is 43 (22%).

Further details in the presentation were:

- What have we done so far?
- Strategy – what do we want to do to achieve our long term goal? (included with the agenda papers)
- Our goal is to reduce offending by Lancashire children by...
- Action Plan – how are we going to do it? (included with the agenda papers)

Hannah Blower presented the "[Reducing Criminalisation through Prevention and Diversion](#)" PowerPoint and provided further information on:

Lancashire Child and Youth Justice Service's Offer

- What is the Lancashire Prevention Service?
- Who can refer?
- What can the Prevention Service help with?

Child-First, Trauma-Informed, Restorative

- Key Service principles
- The model
- Child and Youth Justice Service is tracking all children supported by the Diversion Service and Between 1 October 2019 and 1 November 2020 (83 children were supported via a Community Resolution with Child and Youth Justice Service Intervention (Diversion Programme) of which there were 11 children looked after that were prevented from entering into the criminal justice system and receiving criminal outcomes. Of the eight children that went on re-enter the system, none were children looked after.
- Next steps

Hannah also presented a [case example](#) of some work that was carried out in conjunction with Residential Services to keep a child out of the criminal justice system.

Mike Nunn concluded the presentations with a PowerPoint "[Preventing the criminalisation of looked after children in Residential Care](#)" and it was noted that within Residential Services, the Police call out was still too high and there was more work to do on this. Contained within the presentation were further details on:

- Core principles – these are being revisited.
- Knowing our children – the in-house service has the lowest number of call-outs to the Police across Lancashire.

- Listening to our children
- Principles in Practice – Extracts from reflective conversations with child and staff during debriefs

Sharon Hubber, Director of Children's Services commented that it was really refreshing to see that as an organisation it is accepting that things need to improve or that things are seen from a different viewpoint that maybe was not always child focussed and it takes great courage to stand up and share that and change the way things have previously been done and also get staff to change their mind-set.

A request was made for a breakdown of figures of Police call-outs to care homes in control of the Council and it was agreed that Mike Nunn would provide this information for the Board.

In terms of private homes and young people placed out of the area, part of the review of the protocol is that the Commissioning Team will engage with the Children's Homes that the Council are commissioning, to sign up to the protocol which is the plan of the next review. The challenge is when a child is placed in Lancashire from another area, however all children that are brought to the Services attention will be offered prevention and diversion support.

The Leaving Care Team are included in the In Care Out of Trouble agenda and are doing some of this work with Probation and the Prison Service and they are wanting to work in a more trauma based way as well, which is really positive as that has not always been the case.

- Resolved:**
- i) That the Corporate Parenting Board approved and signed off the 'Reducing offending by Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy (Appendix 'A' of the agenda item) and take a lead role in monitoring, implementation and development of the action plan (Appendix 'B' of the agenda item).
 - ii) That Mike Nunn would provide a breakdown of Police call-outs to care homes in control of the Council to the Board.

6. Update on the Education, Employment and Training (EET) Strategic Plan

Brendan Lee, Head of Children Looked After and Care Leavers and Roxanne McAllister, Team Manager, Children Looked After and Care Leavers, Lancashire County Council gave an update on the [Corporate Parenting Education, Employment and Training \(EET\) Strategy Action Plan](#) that had been completed following the last Board meeting on 10 September 2020 and was circulated with the agenda.

It was noted that everybody has a significant role in helping to deliver the action plan and the governance of it is through the Permanence and Children in Our Care Board and the delivery of the plan will come through the Corporate Parenting Board for scrutiny and receive the performance indicators also and ensure that the Not in Education, Employment and Training numbers of care leavers and young adults are reducing and the plan is effective.

Roxanne McAllister guided the Board through the action plan, detailing that there were five sections to it:

- i) Secondary and further education including apprenticeships for young people in care (mandatory school age)
- ii) Education, employment and training post 18
- iii) Care experienced young people and adults in specific circumstances
- iv) Broader service development/cultural change
- v) Action plan delivery and review

Key performance indicators have been set high and are very ambitious and the context of the plan is to aim high. Further details of the indicators, Lead agency, and action to meet the key performance indicators, progress report and RAG status can be found in the action plan.

Resolved: That the action plan be reported at every Corporate Parenting Board meeting on areas that are struggling and are meeting barriers, however, also report the successes which will enable the Board to support to staff in delivering the action plan.

7. Children in Care and Care Leavers Monthly Performance Report

Umer Khonat, Business Intelligence Analyst, Business Intelligence Team, Lancashire County Council provided an overview of performance information for October 2020 that is produced in relation to Children in Care and Care Leavers that the Board received with the agenda papers.

It was noted that the looked after rate had been stable in the last quarter and similar to the rates that was seen 12 months ago. In terms of numbers, Lancashire are significantly higher than national and statistical neighbours however, they are a lot more stable and there is a lot of work being done on this and the new Family Safeguarding Service will also have an impact too.

The percentage of children looked after with an up-to-date statutory visit has been consistent at 94% and considering the current pandemic and the other difficulties faced, this figure is acceptable and proves that most children are being visited even in these circumstances.

The children looked after reviews during the previous 12 months that were in time was 99.4% and the repeats trajectory over the last 12 months, is showing a decrease which is also good, alongside those young people who had had three or more placements, rates are also decreasing.

Health assessments have proved difficult throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and has slightly increased over the last 3-4 months and a lot of work is being doing to ensure children and young people are seen by health practitioners and that they have an up-to-date health assessment. In contrast, the dental health checks are quite poor with only 63.5% of them currently have a dental check-up up-to-date. This will have been impacted by lockdown as well and information states that this is more of a recording issue, more than an issue whereby children are not being seen by the Dentist.

93% of care leavers are in suitable accommodation (18-20 year olds) and the other 7% are broken down as follows:

- 10 are not in suitable accommodation – homeless or no fixed abode
- 15 are in custody
- 5 in other accommodation
- 2 in bed and breakfasts
- 1 in emergency accommodation

Therefore in total 33 children at the time of reporting were in unsuitable accommodation and 595 were in accommodation deemed as suitable.

There were 47% of care leavers in Education, Employment and Training (EET – 18-20 year olds) and young people who are Not in Education, Employment and Training were as follows:

- 68 due to illness or disability
- 218 other circumstances
- 48 pregnancy or parenting

91% of care leavers have been contacted by the Care Leaving Service in the last two months (18-20 year olds).

The data presented to the Corporate Parenting Board will be further developed through the Education, Employment and Training Strategy Action Plan as discussed in the previous item.

Resolved: That the Board noted the October 2020 performance report.

8. Timetable of Meetings 2021/2022

The timetable of meetings for 2021/2022 was noted.

9. Care Leavers Christmas Gift

Sam Gorton, Democratic Services Officer, Democratic Services informed the Board that a total so far of £5875 had been raised for Lancashire's Care Leavers Christmas Gifts and will be distributed before Christmas.

10. Any Other Business

Jake, a member of LINX (Lancashire's Children in Care Council) informed the Board that the recipe book he had created during lockdown was now available and if anybody required a copy, to inform Sam Gorton (sam.gorton@lancashire.gov.uk) and she would pass the request on to Barnardo's.

11. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday, 21 January 2021 at 6pm via Zoom.