

Corporate Parenting Board

Meeting to be held on Tuesday, 16 March 2021

Report of the Head of Service of Children's Permanence - Children Our Care and Leaving Care

Electoral Division affected: (None)
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Overview of the Restructure within the Permanence Service, Lancashire County Council

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Executive Summary

This report provides an update regarding Lancashire County Council's Permanence Service and recent developments in both Children in our Care and our Leaving Care Service.

Both services have benefited from the focus of one Head of Service and five Senior Managers who work across the whole of the Council's footprint with a flattened management structure and significant investment in staffing within the Leaving Care Service.

There is a clear focus on achieving consistency in our practice and our offer, to all our children and young people and an ambitious plan for our future offer to all. This is particularly the case for our young adults aged between 18 and 25 years.

While all staff have been based at home during the period of lockdown due to COVID-19, workers and managers have continued to visit children and young adults and have been mindful of the impact of restrictions on their mental health and social relationships. All children in care of the Authority have an updated risk assessment regarding the impact of COVID-19 as have the majority of young adults in our leaving care service.

Recommendation

The Corporate Parenting Board is asked to note this update and consider the impact for our children and young people in both the short and longer term.

Background and Advice

Leaving Care

The Leaving Care Service has seen additional staffing to the tune of two Senior Managers, withdrawal of two Practice Managers, increase of seven Team Managers, ten Personal Advisors as well as welcoming seven Social Work Apprentices.

This has allowed us to reshape the service and our consistent offer to all care leavers. Key changes currently include more frequent face to face visits, an offer of direct service provision to young people over the age of 21, increased expectations of the multi-agency support made available to young people and us having higher aspirations for them

Plans are in place for stronger collaboration with our young people and our partners to deliver along key priority areas.

1. More opportunities for all to achieve in education and employment
2. More appropriate and sustainable housing for all our care leavers
3. Achieving and maintaining good physical and mental health
4. Support to maintain family and social relationships
5. Ensuring our care leavers are effectively safeguarded and have appropriate, timely supports at any time they may not feel safe.

Children in Our Care

The Children in Our Care Service now comprises of three Senior Managers, 16 Team Managers and 93 Social Workers.

The structure has allowed us to bring together all of the Children in Our Care Teams which will enable us to deliver a consistent and improved service to all of our children and young people.

Plans are in place for stronger collaboration with our young people and our partners to deliver within our key priority areas.

1. Improving the mental health offer for our children and young people.
2. Achieving permanence and placement stability through increased focus on high quality homes for our children.
3. Supporting workforce development to encourage our social workers to dream big for our children and work alongside them to create aspirational care plans.
4. More opportunities to improve children's physical and emotional health.
5. Develop better reports which look for new ways to measure outcomes and success for our children.
6. Ensure that the right children are in our service.