

Lancashire County Council

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 18th January, 2022 at 10.30 am in Teams Virtual Meeting - Teams

Present:

County Councillor Andrea Kay (Chair)

County Councillors

J Berry	J Mein
A Cheetham	M Salter
S Clarke	A Sutcliffe
S Hind	R Swarbrick
T Hurn	R Woollam
S Jones	B Yates
N Khan	S Serridge
S Malik	

Co-opted members

Daniel Ballard, Representing CE Schools

County Councillor Samara Barnes was replaced by County Councillor Sean Serridge.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Simon Smith, Co-Optee Voting, representing Roman Catholic Schools.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

No interests were declared.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2021

Resolved: The minutes from the meeting held on 7th December 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record.

4. Children Looked After - Education, Employment and Training, Housing, School Transitions, and Health

The Chair welcomed Barbara Bath, Interim Director of Children's Social Care and Brendan Lee, Head of Service Looked After Children and Leaving Care from Lancashire County Council to discuss a report has been prepared for the

committee to provide a progress update in relation to work being carried out in three specific key areas:

- Children and Young People not in Education, Employment or Training (EET);
- Children, Young People and Housing; and
- Children, Young People and School Transitions.

Following the remodelling of Lancashire County Council's Children's Services implemented on 4 January 2021, the Permanence Service was formed and is made up of the Children in Our Care teams and Leaving Care teams. The service focusses on supporting children who are Looked After with a plan of permanence and Care Experienced young people.

Members thanked Brendan Lee for his presentation.

Comments and queries were raised by the committee as follows:

- In response to how success is measured, the county council hope for 98%+ of Looked After children in EET. In a year's time, they would want to see progress increase month-on-month and hope to see 16-17 year olds at 90%, with care leavers where the young people are now. Then in a year's time, the 16-17 year olds will become the 18-19 year olds, and hope that they can remain high figures at 80%.
- It was confirmed that the county council's Business Intelligence team are involved in the tracking. To measure progress, officers would look to compare figures with partners in nearby authorities by understanding their stories and progress.
- It was clarified that the house project base, would be an accessible place for young people, not just Monday–Friday during the hours of 9:00am-5:00pm, where they can touchdown and receive support from a personal adviser or social worker. There would need to be more than one base in a geographical area. Officers informed the committee they intend to pilot one base, to make sure they get everything right before opening more in Lancashire. They would like it to be near other National House Project properties to build on partnerships.
- Members queried about Looked After children living in Lancashire who are under the responsibility of a different authority and living in private provision. It was explained that private provisions are regulated by Ofsted. Ofsted are responsible for approving their registration and then responsible for inspecting them. Since September 2021, it is unlawful to place a child under the age of 16, requiring care in an unregistered placement and by autumn 2023, it is expected that establishments providing care to 16-17 year olds, will also require to register with Ofsted. For other authorities placing a child into an establishment in Lancashire, there is a statutory requirement for them to notify Lancashire County

Council, education, and health. Day to day care and planning of the child remains the responsibility of the host authority, however, if an emergency safeguarding issue rises then the county council must respond to this immediate issue and work with the host authority to forward plan.

- In terms of five short-medium term homes for children with complex needs, it was noted that children who cannot cope in large (six bedded) children's homes due to complexities were moved into the private sector. However, it has proved more challenging to place children in the private sector who need smaller homes, therefore it was agreed by Cabinet to restructure residential provision and now some larger homes are being converted to small (three bedded) children's homes. One property has been converted, one is currently being proposed with an addition of an adolescent support unit, one other home to be repurposed from existing property in Lancashire, and an emergency provision home. There are also plans to create two adolescent support units, these will not be a permanent home, but offer a range of outreach and weekend respite support for children and families who are at crisis and risk of coming into care.
- In terms of length of stay in care homes and integrating into the local community, it was clarified that permanence and lasting homes are a priority if a child requires to stay in care, but there is also the option to return home, as each child's reason for being in care is different. Care plans are in place to know the child's hobbies and interests and how to access them in their local area.
- Members asked for the timeline of recruiting for the house project, it was explained the recruitment process has begun. Adverts have been posted and some interviews have been set-up.
- It was clarified if members receive complaints about private provision homes, they should approach the county council first.

The Chair thanked Brendan and Barbara for the report and for answering questions from the committee.

Resolved: that;

- i. The report and information presented be considered.
- ii. An update be provided to the committee in six-months.

5. Public Health Children's Update and Areas of Concern

The Chair welcomed Ruksana Sardar-Akram, Interim Public Health Consultant, Karen Gosling, Senior Public Health Practitioner, and Chris Lee, Public Health Specialist (Behaviour Change) from Lancashire County Council to provide the committee with a Public Health update on children's health and wellbeing and to highlight inequalities and areas of concern.

The pandemic has had a huge impact on the health and wellbeing of children and young people. The demand on Public Health to manage COVID-19 within

education settings continues to be a challenge, which also impacts on the delivery and commissioning of services for children and young people. This inevitably has some impact on the outcomes for children and young people and their families.

The report provided an overview in relation to Coronavirus in children, as well as an update on child health outcomes based on national indicators and child health profiles. The true extent of inequality is not yet known.

Members thanked Ruksana, Karen and Chris for the report.

Comments and queries were raised by the committee as follows:

- In terms of delivering education to reduce obesity rates, it was noted that as part of the National Child Measurement Program, each child in Reception and year 10 is assessed by the school nursing team. There is also a program being developed in conjunction with district councils to promote physical activity and healthy nutrition. Personal, Social, Health and Economic resources from the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities are also shared with schools. Members expressed that they would like to see more nutrition advice for young people and their families.
- It was noted that as part of the Oral Health Strategy, advice is being provided along with free toothbrushes and toothpaste and supervised brushing in schools.
- Regarding the use of social media and mental health and self-harm resources in colleges, it was explained that there has been a focus on colleges and Lancashire County Council have commissioned a program of work called Emotional Health and Wellbeing in Schools and Colleges from a team of clinical psychologists based in Lancaster University. They provide structured support and build the skill level and resilience of staff working in education settings. There is also a range of programs available online. The Public Health team also work with other authorities in Lancashire to ensure they are not duplicating training and with the Child Death Overview Panel to develop a contagion protocol to look at a range of interventions. Colleges also have access to a named school nurse and a service is commissioned to provide an app library to young people as part of early self-care.
- Members requested for the source of data for children killed on the roads in Lancashire to be shared with the committee and to be able to breakdown the data.
- It was clarified that the school nursing team are available to young people suffering with mental and emotional health issues. As part of the Healthy Lifestyle questionnaires offered to children in years 6 and 9, the school nurses have access to the individual responses to be able to triage. The questionnaire also provides an anonymised summary which goes to the school to be able to understand health needs at a local level.

- In response to queries on attainment, it was understood that school readiness is the key factor to ensure young people are prepared for school. There is the Best Start in Life subgroup which focusses on this topic and looks if targeted support is needed in specific areas.
- In regard to Health Visitors following up on the two and a half year old review, any issues should be signposted to the relevant service. With support from the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities, the health visitor and nursery nurse team have been trained in Early Language Identification Measure, a new best practice tool. Some children go down the referral pathway, whilst others will receive a follow-up from the nursery nurse to check for improvements in their development.
- It was confirmed that Lancashire County Council do have a relationship with UCLAN dental clinic, who deliver the dental epidemiology survey contract on behalf of the county council every year.
- The committee asked for an action plan to come back at a future meeting, which demonstrates how to achieve more statistical equity across Lancashire for health improvements.
- In answer to concerns about the youth justice system, it was clarified that data shows this is improving. There is commissioned targeted youth alcohol and drugs services that received extra funding from the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities. Lancashire County Council also works with the Violence Reduction Network led by the police.

The Chair thanked Ruksana, Karen and Chris for their time.

Actions:

- Action plan to be fed back to the committee to demonstrate how the county council aims to achieve statistical equity for health improvements across Lancashire.

Resolved: That the update and areas of concern be acknowledged.

In addition, the following county councillors be appointed as 'rapporteurs':

- i. County Councillors Hind and Sutcliffe to work with the Public Health service to further explore healthy eating with a view to reporting findings back to the committee
- ii. County Councillors Cheetham and Jones to work with the Public Health services to further explore healthy teeth with a view to reporting findings back to the committee; and
- iii. County Councillors Berry, Woollam and Swarbrick to further explore information behind the data on children seriously injured or killed on Lancashire roads to report back at the March meeting of the committee.

6. Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2021/22

The committee received a report which provided information on the work programme for the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

The topics included in the work programme were identified at the work planning workshop held on 5 July 2021 and at subsequent meetings.

Members enquired about the following subjects:

- The number of schools within districts that have a sixth form attached and the nearest further education institutions.
- An update from Mel Ormesher, Head of Service Asset Management, Lancashire County Council regarding school place provision.

Resolved: That,

- i. The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2021/22 be noted.
- ii. A review be undertaken on the actions and recommendations from previous scrutiny meetings.

7. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

8. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted the next meeting of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee will be held on Wednesday 22nd February 2022 at 10:30am in Committee Room A – The Tudor Room, County Hall, Preston.

L Sales
Director of Corporate Services

County Hall
Preston