

Lancashire County Council

Corporate Parenting Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 19th September, 2023 at 6.00 pm
in Savoy Suite 1 - The Exchange, County Hall, Preston, PR1 8XJ

Present: Members

County Councillor Stephen Clarke	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Jeff Couperthwaite	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Ron Woollam	- Lancashire County Council
County Councillor Julie Gibson	- Lancashire County Council (Virtual – Teams)
David Russo	- Fostering Forum
Jaymie	- LINX/CLF Representative
Emma	- LINX/CLF Representative
Horateo	- LINX/CLF Representative
Mary	- LINX/CLF Representative
Chris	- LINX/CLF Representative

Co-opted members

Audrey Swann	- Education Improvement, LCC
Andreas Feldhaar	- Permanence Service, LCC
Mandy Williams	- Family Safeguarding Service, LCC
Moya McKinney	- Permanence Service - Leaving Care, LCC
Gina Power	- Permanence Service - Children in Our Care, LCC
Hayley Kinowski	- Safeguarding, Audit and Inspection, LCC
Catherine Brooks	- Child and Family Wellbeing Service, LCC
Adam Riley	- Child and Family Wellbeing Service, LCC
April Pollitt	- Child and Family Wellbeing Service, LCC
Louise Humphreys	- Department for Work and Pensions
Bev Maymond	- Fostering Provider
Alex Wood	- Residential Provider
Caroline Waldron	- NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board
Maureen Huddleston	- Enhanced CLA Health Teams, University Hospitals Morecambe Bay (Virtual – Teams)

Other Attendees

Brendan Lee	- Looked After Children and Children in Care, LCC
Louise Anderson	- Children's Social Care, LCC

Clare Smith	- Policy, Commissioning and Children's Health, LCC
Jane Hylton	- Care Leavers Team, LCC
Aaron Walmsley-Fishwick	- Care Leavers Team, LCC
Sam Gorton	- Democratic Services, LCC

1. Introductions and Apologies

All were welcomed to the meeting and apologies were received from County Councillors Sutcliffe and Kay, Katy Hodgkinson, Andy Smith, Janice Laing, Clare Platt, Neil Drummond and Jo Swords.

County Councillor Julie Gibson and Maureen Huddleston joined the meeting via Microsoft Teams.

The Board were informed of new members since the last meeting (excluding the young people's meeting) held in May 2023:

- CC Jeff Couperthwaite had replaced CC Anne Cheetham, Lancashire County Council
- CC Howard Hartley, Lancashire County Council had filled a vacant position
- Alex Wood had replaced Angela Epps as the Residential Provider
- Bev Maymond, Fostering Provider had filled a vacant position

Louise Humphreys was attending on behalf of Edna Skillen, Department for Work and Pensions.

The Board noted that this meeting was Jaymie's (young person) last meeting. On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked Jaymie for his support and contributions over the years in representing the Children in Care Council (LINX), Care Leavers Forum and for his support at the Board meetings and was wished all the best for the future on behalf of all the members on the Corporate Parenting Board.

2. Appointment of Chair and Deputy Chair

Resolved: That the Committee noted the appointment by the County Council on 25 May 2023 of County Councillors Clarke and Sutcliffe as Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee, respectively, for 2023/24.

3. Notes of the Meeting and Matters Arising from 10 May 2023

Resolved: That the minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

Matters Arising

Page 3 - The Board were informed that following on from the request at the last meeting, for the Chair, on behalf of the Board, to write a letter to Facilities Management, Lancashire County Council, supporting the request for the Care Leavers Forum to have an identified space on Wednesday evenings at County Hall, that this had now been agreed and the young people have met a few times since the agreement and it was felt to be working well and will be kept under review.

Page 5 – CC Gibson raised the final bullet point which was that a motion had been taken to Full Council on 23 February 2023 where it had been highlighted that there was a campaign to make 'care experienced' a protected characteristic and that several councils across the UK had already supported this campaign and requested that Lancashire County Council also support the campaign. CC Gibson asked for an update on this piece of work, and it was noted that this was part of the discussion at Item 6, Care Leaver Covenant and also:

Resolved: That Brendan Lee, Head of Permanence will arrange a meeting, following discussions with Louise Anderson, Director of Children's Social Care, with the Chair, Deputy Chair and CC Gibson with regards to making 'care experienced' a protected characteristic and how Lancashire will take this forward.

4. Constitution, Membership and Terms of Reference of the Committee

The Board discussed the revised Constitution, Membership and Terms of Reference as set out at Appendix 'A', and following discussion, it was agreed that further amendments should also be included, as below:

Resolved: That the Corporate Parenting Board reviewed and approved the revised Constitution, Membership and Terms of Reference as set out at Appendix 'A', which includes the additional responsibility of the Board for overseeing the county council's adoption and implementation of the Care Leavers Covenant 'whole Council approach' following the request of Cabinet on 6 July 2023. There should also be the addition of Health and amend Lancashire's Children in Care Council (LINX) to also include the Care Leavers Forum (CLF) under the section "The Board will receive advice and reports from the following...".

5. Participation Team Update

Young people from LINX (Lancashire's Children in Care Council) and the Care Leavers Forum (CLF) provided findings from the Corporate Parenting Board Youth Takeover event on 26 July 2023. The Board noted that 52 people from across different services in Lancashire County Council including Elected Members, NHS, private providers and other partners as well as 19 young people. A presentation with further feedback can be found appended to the minutes. The meeting included:

- An ice breaker.
- A young person spoke about their positive experience which included a good news story around support for getting employment and training.
- A creative activity about participation based on the Lundy model.
- Carousel style table discussions on Corporate Parenting Board priorities (Financial Support, Lasting Homes, Health and Wellbeing, Employment Education and Training) where each table looked at five main questions:
 - i) What is already happening?
 - ii) What is yet to happen?
 - iii) What would make the biggest change?
 - iv) Who or what can make this happen?
 - v) How can young people find out what's going on or of the change made?

There was positive feedback received at the end of the session which included:

- Less professional works better
- Good speech
- Great day – loved being able to speak to young people and hear their views – so important you take them forward.
- Lots to think about for me about how we undertake participation.
- Was a very good day should do it again to look at the progress of the points we spoke about.

Following on from the meeting in July 2023, young people focused on some points from what would make the biggest change, and spotlighted key areas on each topic:

What would make the biggest change?

Feedback showed some common overarching themes which were:

- That young people need to be involved as early as possible.
- There needs to be better working together across the different services and better communication between the Council, other agencies and those that help young people such as social workers and personal advisors.

The Board were informed of things that young people think will make a difference, include:

- Health - helping with the skills to ensure young people are in good health.
- Lasting homes - extending the Housing Project and being more open when young people express a preference to live in a particular area.
- Education, Employment Training - being more directly involved in leading and managing Personal Education Plans (PEP).
- Financial support - more support particularly with making transitions would be really helpful. Young people can be confused about what is available.

Education, Employment and Training:

The feedback that has been provided suggests that there may be some helpful solutions which could help all care experienced young people. Different organisations and teams are working together to help young people, however, some more support is needed.

Young people mentioned about them being more involved with their Personal Education Plans (PEP) however, they feel this can be difficult and need support to develop the skills to help them do this.

Young people commented that growing up can be worrying and stressful and that more support is needed to help them really understand the available options and what support is available. They also need help to be able to develop the range of skills that will help them with future employment. They feel that the way in which the various organisations communicate and share information with young people can be improved. They feel that young people need to be more directly involved in helping with communications and the methods in which it is shared. Many young people are active and know where to get information, however, it needs to be presented in a more young person friendly and accessible way.

Lasting Homes

Young people commented that the transition to independence is a really important time in their life and there are things in place to help with this, however, if this is to be successful then some further support would be helpful, particularly in extending the House Project, given the challenges of housing across Lancashire and putting in place a preparation programme that is more flexible in how it will seek to engage with young people, and lessen any barriers that might otherwise put young people off from participating.

Points that stood out for young people the most were:

- Expanding the House Project.
- Changes within Social Housing to prioritise care leavers.
- Increase in one bedroom accommodation across the county.
- Support for practical tasks like DIY, a place to ask simple questions.
- Local connection being able to be challenged when a young person may have lived in a number of areas, or they want to move for career/education reasons.
- Managing transitions better so young people know what is going on.

Financial support

Young people know there is a wide offer for children and young people regarding financial support, however they feel there are still some gaps in young people knowing what they are entitled to ie staying close, staying put, wider funding for aspirations and hobbies eg young drivers, College bursary, summer bursary flexibility, extended work placements and free school meals.

Health and wellbeing

Young people commented that within this group there had been vast discussions around health and wellbeing around what is already available and what is yet to happen as well as the additional support that is needed. The key points that stood out to young people are to extend offers past 25 years, increase dental pathways, moving areas should not put you at the bottom of the list and automatic referrals take a while. They also feel that the access to GPs and support could be reviewed to ensure that young people have easier ways to talk to them or ensure they are receiving the right support they need.

During the session, young people also wanted to see if anyone had any new ideas on how care experienced children and young people can be informed of new changes and developments and to ensure that consistency is key by using a range of methods as it is not one size fits all. Some examples are provided in the presentation attached.

Following the young people's presentation, the following comments were made:

- Some of the points young people have raised are already being done and why do they not know about them, and other things are longer term fixes, where conversations are being had about them and other issues are fixes that can be done quickly.
- The Board needs to support the issues raised and discuss what needs to happen next as a Board and bring it together as an action plan.
- There is a separate health meeting where health and Children's Social Care colleagues meet to ensure that all requirements highlighted in the health priority are being met and this is something that needs to be reported back into the Corporate Parenting Board, and discussions will take place regarding this, on the best way forward.
- Again, in health, some of the issue raised are already happening, some can be done and also the information that has been provided by the young people will also inform some of the national work that is going on because there is a strong inference that the current guidance that shapes support for care leavers and children in care is being reviewed by Government and they are asking for young people's viewpoints.
- Feedback on the Health priority will be feedback to the Health Subgroup.
- It was agreed that Andreas Feldhaar, Permanence Service and April Pollitt, Participation Team, Lancashire County Council devise an action plan and have this signed off by the relevant management board and present this back to the Corporate Parenting Board so it can be monitored, and key

performance indicators (KPI's) set. Clare Smith, Policy, Commissioning and Children's Health Team, Lancashire County Council also agreed to support this area of work.

- The Corporate Parenting Board really value young people's input and really want to listen and act on what they are saying.
- Young people need to ensure issues are as specific as possible for the action plan.
- There were around six pages of bullet points from the meeting on 26 July 2023 and it was agreed that April Pollitt, Participation Team would circulate the relevant bullet points to the teams so that these can be actioned and utilised within the relevant services.
- The Board also needs to celebrate its' successes and look at how this can be done.
- Following on from the Young People's meeting look at having a 1/2/5-year plan and put timescales in there and seek the young people's top priorities which they want to be achieved first with timescales.

Resolved: That the Corporate Parenting Board:

- i) Thanked young people for their feedback from the Corporate Parenting Board Youth Takeover meeting on 26 July 2023 and that their comments are noted and will feed back into the different services.
- ii) Agreed that Health colleagues need to discuss further, how to feedback outcomes from the meetings that are held with Children's Social Care colleagues around issues raised by young people in the health priority.
- iii) Agreed that Caroline Waldron, Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board, would ensure that issues raised under the health priority, will inform national work that is being reviewed by Government on current guidance that shapes support for care leavers and children in care.
- iv) Agreed that Andreas Feldhaar, Permanence Service and April Pollitt, Participation Team, Lancashire County Council devise an action plan and have this signed off by the relevant management board and present this back to the Corporate Parenting Board so it can be monitored, and key performance indicators (KPI's) set. Clare Smith, Policy, Commissioning and Children's Health Team, Lancashire County Council also agreed to support this area of work.
- v) Agreed that April Pollitt, Participation Team, Lancashire County Council would circulate the relevant bullet points from the feedback at the meeting on 26 July 2023 to the teams so that these can be actioned and utilised within the relevant services.

6. Care Leaver Covenant

Andreas Feldhaar, Permanence Service, Lancashire County Council provided the Board with an update on the Care Leaver Covenant and Protected Characteristics. Further information can be found in the [presentation](#) that was attached to the agenda. The Corporate Parenting Board agreed to adopt the Care Leaver Covenant in 2022 and it was agreed by Cabinet in July 2023 that Lancashire County Council would adopt the 'whole Council approach' and the Terms of Reference of the Board were amended to reflect this as discussed at Item 4.

Clare Smith, Policy, Commissioning and Children's Health, Lancashire County Council reminded the Board that the Council had also made a commitment to consider care experience as a protected characteristic and that this will support how the covenant is implemented. The campaign is being led nationally by Terry Galloway and 51 Councils nationally have passed motions of a similar nature regarding considering Care Experience as a protected characteristic alongside the other nine that are covered under the Equality Act 2010 making it illegal to discriminate for those reasons (eg age, disability, sex, pregnancy and maternity). Lancashire was the 16th Council in the country to pass the motion at Full Council on 23 February 2023.

The Board were asked to note and discuss how this can now move forwards as per the Lancashire Resolution which was passed on 23 February 2023 which was:

- i) When making decisions in relation to policies or plans to revisit present strategies that we recognise care experienced people as a vulnerable group who can face discrimination.
- ii) That we recognise the Council has a duty to put the needs of vulnerable people at the heart of decision-making through co-production and collaboration with them.
- iii) That the Council commits to consider those with care experience in the publication and review of its Equality Objectives and the annual publication of information relating to people who share a protected characteristic in services and employment.
- iv) That the Council considers the impact of care experience when reviewing relevant strategy and/or policies alongside protected characteristics.
- v) To promote our Corporate Parenting principles to other bodies and consider care experience with Council strategy alongside protected characteristic policy.
- vi) To formally call upon other bodies to adopt Corporate Parenting for children in care and care leavers.
- vii) Thank the Corporate Parenting Board for their leadership under County Councillor Clarke, recognised as Good in the January 2022 Ofsted Report.

The Board were asked how this can now be implemented with points iii) and iv) above being the most pertinent. In terms of the Equality Objectives a target could

be set by the Board to increase the number of care experienced apprentices, for example that Lancashire County Council employ as a local authority by a certain percentage, with four years to improve it. Also, going forwards, the Board may wish to agree that the Council considers the impact of care experience when reviewing relevant strategy or policies alongside protected characteristics.

The Board noted that there are also some national forums (both for professionals and young people) being formed to discuss how the authorities that have passed the motion can put it into practice to strengthen the work on behalf of care experienced people.

Under the whole Council approach, there are four priority areas that have been identified that the Council work on for care experienced young people which are:

- i) Training and Employment
- ii) Policy Partnerships
- iii) Social Value
- iv) Economic Development

The Board were asked to discuss in groups the four priority areas and:

- Brainstorm
- Pick the top two priorities.
- How will we do it and who do we need to support us?
- How do we monitor progress and outcomes?

Feedback was then provided from each group and is appended to the minutes.

The Council as part of the whole Council approach to the Covenant will make a joint public statement with Spectra to say this is what Lancashire is committing to.

In terms of the protected characteristics and ring-fencing jobs for care leavers the Board were reminded that this was discussed a few years ago, that whenever the Council went out to tender there was a certain number of apprenticeships that were ringfenced for care experienced young people. It was also noted that the Trade Unions should also be involved to support this.

The Board noted that the report will be presented to the Council's Chief Executive's Leadership Team by officers and care experienced young people and then to the Wider Leadership Team and a pledge will be requested from each Service, which will be reported and measured on.

There was also a suggestion with regards to a public campaign to raise awareness around the protected characteristic and those groups are protected and that maybe this was something the Care Leaver Forum could look at leading on raising awareness of what brilliant and fantastic young people Lancashire has

and to alleviate the negative stereotypes and this can be part of a detailed comms strategy.

Resolved: That this item would be brought back to future meetings on progress made, following on from the discussions and following presentations at Leadership meetings.

7. Care Leaver Week

Jane Hylton, Leaving Care Team, Lancashire County Council gave a presentation to the Board on the upcoming Care Leavers week which would be held 23-27 October 2023.

The Board noted the following that had been planned for the week:

- Events across the county planned by the locality Leaving Care Teams.
- Outdoor activity day at Borwick Hall.
- Outdoor activity day at Hothersall Lodge (Corporate Parent offer).
- Celebration Evening in The Exchange – 26 October 2023.
- In My Shoes Challenge – Care Leavers Forum

At the Celebration Evening there will be a raffle for young people and Board members were asked that if they had any community contacts to let Aaron Walmsley-Fishwick know, and he will contact them to see if they would donate a raffle prize. Alternatively if any Board members wished to donate a prize, to contact either Jane Hylton, email jane.hylton@lancashire.gov.uk or Aaron Walmsley-Fishwick, email aaron.walmsley-fishwick@lancashire.gov.uk.

The Care Leaver Forum have come up with an idea called Reality Paypoint 'In Our Shoes' challenge. Members were asked to get involved and live off a care leaver's allowance for a day and to feedback thoughts and feelings for that day through a diary, photographs or short story for examples. The information from the day will be collated with corporate comms and shared through Care Leavers Week to have an impact on strengthening the relationships and reflection on the life of a care leaver. Please forward replies to April Pollitt, email april.pollitt@lancashire.gov.uk or Matt Rowe, email matthew.rowe@lancashire.gov.uk by Monday 16 October 2023.

Resolved: The Board noted the Care Leaver week information and accepted the Challenge set.

8. Local Member Grants

Andreas Feldhaar, Permanence Service, Lancashire County Council informed the Board that on 5 May 2022, Cabinet agreed that any funds left over in the Local Member Grant budget at year end over the £200 that each member can carry forward be allocated to schemes or projects designed to support looked after children and care leavers, with details of these allocations to be reported to the Corporate Parenting Board.

The Board noted that the projects that have been identified for 2023 are as follows:

- Care Leavers' Week
- PROUD Awards Ceremony
- Care Leavers' Residential Weekend
- Child in Our Care Activity and Engagement Days

Resolved: That the Board noted the projects that will be supported from the unspent Local Members Grant fund as agreed by Cabinet in May 2022.

9. Any Other Business

Former Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board

The Board paid their respects, following the passing of the former Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board, Sue Pryn, who was a passionate advocate for children in care and care leavers.

10. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday, 22 November 2023 at 6pm in the Savoy Suite, The Exchange, County Hall, Preston, PR1 8RJ.