

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES****COUNCILLOR MAUREEN BATESON****PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
DIRECTOR: GLADYS RHODES-  
WHITE****DATE: 30<sup>th</sup> August 2012****Looked after Children (LAC) & Care Leavers**

The number of children remains steady at 343 – 30 less than at the same point last year; and the lowest figure for June since 2009.

We currently have 200 children the subject of CP Plans and 339 children looked after. These are still high compared to the national average and require constant monitoring and review of risks.

Outcomes for Children in Our Care.

In the first quarter 2011/12:

- 9 children have been adopted and 8 have been made subject of Specific Guardianship Orders.
- The projection for the year is that achievement of permanence for children in our care will be significantly above the national average.
- 8 young people (care leavers) are currently attending University.
- 6 young people have completed University degrees in the last two years – 4 are in work and 2 are now full time parents.
- 75% of our Care leavers aged 19 years are in Education, Training or Employment – the national average last year was 61%.

**Adoption Roundtable**

On 22nd June 2012 the department held its first Adoption Roundtable meeting, in response to a letter sent to all Directors of Children's Services from the Minister Tim Loughton. All authorities were asked to consider how they can improve the timescales for adoption cases. The purpose of the meeting was to bring together all those with a role to play in the adoption of a child in their local authority, to consider how to reduce delays in finding adoptive families for children in the Council's care. This meeting was well attended including representatives from the judiciary, legal representatives, CAF/CASS, the adoption regional network, health and social care. All attendees completed pledge cards during the meeting, and these have been used to form an action plan for continued multi-agency work in addressing the issues.

**Corporate Parenting**

The Corporate Parenting Committee met in July; chaired by Councillor Frank Connor. The membership has been extended to include partner representation from Health, Police and the third sector. Young people are represented via VOICE (looked after children committee).

This committee is an important opportunity to ensure that children who are 'looked after' (LAC) in Blackburn with Darwen have the best opportunity to reach their potential. Officers and elected members have 'corporate' responsibilities to act as 'good parents' for all of our looked after children. This Committee needs to ensure 'corporate parenting' is exercised effectively.