

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES**COUNCILLOR FRANK CONNOR****PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
DIRECTOR: LINDA CLEGG
DATE: 27 June 2013****NUMBERS OF CHILDREN IN CARE AND OTHER CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE INFORMATION**

There are currently 358 children in care with the pattern since January 2012 ranging between 340 and 360. The current number of children subject to Child Protection Plans is 175 which is an increase since March 2013 and a similar level to August 2012. The number of open cases is currently 1689.

The number of contacts at the front door has remained high, typically around 800 a month, but the number of contacts that progress through for assessment has remained steady at an average of 160 a month.

KOESTLER TRUST ART AWARD (YOUTH JUSTICE)

The Youth Justice Service ran a Summer Arts College for three weeks in August 2012. Amongst various art forms the young people created a video including their own lyrics entitled "Gifted Life". This was filmed and edited by the young people themselves and was entered for the Koestler Trust Awards for which the young people received a special award for under 18's.

The Koestler Trust is an organisation developed to recognise the talents of people who are involved with the Criminal Justice System or held in secure hospitals under Mental Health legislation. The young people involved received a certificate and £25. They have also been entered into the main judging category during June and July and if successful they will be invited to an event in London's South Bank in September. As the Youth Justice Service is expecting to organise another Summer Arts College in August this year, it is hoping that this award will inspire other young people.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES AWARDS 2013

Child Action North West's (CANW) youth justice Triage and Triage Plus service has been shortlisted for the Community Panel Awards by the Howard League for Penal Reform in the 'Restorative Justice' category. The awards will be presented at the national conference taking place on 17th July 2013 at the Kings Fund, London. As a shortlisted project CANW will be invited to attend the conference and exhibit their work.

In brief, the scheme involves diverting low level offenders from the criminal justice system by involving them in community reparation and apologising to victims. The Triage Plus service which is specific to Blackburn with Darwen involves an assessment and interventions with those young people requiring additional support to get them back on track. We are delighted for CANW and for all those who have benefitted from the service.

PROGRESS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

The Munro Report 'A Child Centred System' and the new version of Working Together 2013 has redefined the context in which services are provided to children in need and has presented all Local Authorities nationally with a number of interesting challenges. Blackburn with Darwen Children's Services is making significant progress in the following areas:

- Becoming 'risk sensible' (Munro Report): we have developed a new 'fit for purpose' model of risk assessment and management which is consistent with Munro's

expectations. A training programme for all qualified social workers is due to begin in June 2013 and the new model will be implemented in full on 3rd September 2013.

- Development of an Assessment Protocol (Working Together): a task and finish group has been convened to work on this. Significant progress has been made and a first draft of the protocol will be available in mid-June. It is anticipated that the protocol will be available to share with partner agencies in July / August 2013 with full implementation in September 2013.
- Implementation of the 'Single Assessment' model: Blackburn with Darwen has been working alongside Lancashire and Blackpool Children's Services to develop an effective pan-Lancashire model. This was 'signed off' in mid May 2013. A piece of work was undertaken to introduce the changes to managers and staff with the new model implemented on 3rd June 2013.

CELEBRATION OF ACHIEVEMENT EVENTS FOR CIOC

This year the Celebration of Achievement events for Children in Our Care (CIOC) were again held at The Youth Zone, Blackburn. We celebrated the achievements of secondary aged young people and care leavers on Sunday 12th May with a 'Cirque Du Soleil' theme. Twenty six young people received awards for achieving 100% attendance at school with others completing their university studies. Two young people from The VOICE group also received awards. The event coincided with the start of Fostering Fortnight and two young people gave an account of their experiences of being in foster care.

The event for primary school aged children was held on Sunday 19th May, with the children treated to a 'Mad Hatters Tea Party', with characters from 'Alice in Wonderland' present. Twenty eight children received awards for the brilliant progress that they had made over the last 12 months. We celebrated children who had made far better progress in school than their peers and also children who had learnt to play the keyboard and performed in front of the whole school. Both events highlighted the fact that we really do have many talented children and young people in our care.

PRIVATE FOSTERING WEEK (8TH AND 12TH JULY 2013)

A number of events will be held in children's centres and community venues during the week 8th to 12th July to promote Private Fostering Week, including a public information stall within Blackburn Shopping Centre.

Many private foster carers (prospective and actual) and parents are not aware of the local authority notification requirements and as a result, many private fostering arrangements remain hidden, leaving the children placed in them vulnerable to abuse and neglect. The law requires parents, prospective private foster carers and those who receive a child in an emergency or who were providing accommodation for a child when he became a privately fostered child, and any other person who is, or who proposes to be involved in arranging for a child to be privately fostered to notify the local authority of the arrangement.

The publicity events throughout the Private Fostering Week will capitalise on the raising awareness activities that have been made throughout the year.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR YOUNG CARERS

As part of Young Carers Week (10-16th June) young carers were consulted on a memorandum of understanding between Adults Social Care and Children's Services to ensure that services are joined up at the point of delivery. The memorandum of understanding will reach a final position in the coming weeks and will be launched when schools return in September.