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**REPORT TO: MORAY INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD CLINICAL AND CARE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ON 30 NOVEMBER 2023**

**SUBJECT: INSPECTION OF FOSTERING, ADOPTION AND ADULT PLACEMENT JUNE/JULY 2023**

**BY: HEAD OF SERVICE AND CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

1.1 To update the Committee following a full inspection of Placement Services (fostering, adoption and adult placement) by the Care Inspectorate in June/July 2023.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 **It is recommended that the Committee scrutinise and note the outcome of the full inspection of Placement Services (fostering, adoption and adult placement) by the Care Inspectorate in June/July 2023.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 Fostering, adoption and adult placement are inspected on a regular basis by the Care Inspectorate.

3.2 Adult placement is a service where young people remain in the same placement when they reach eighteen years of age. This provides continuity and stability for young people supporting transition from childhood to adulthood.

3.3 The inspection in July 2023 was preceded by an inspection of the same services in March 2022. As such, the inspection in June/July 2023 should be viewed as a follow up inspection which was the approach of the Care Inspectorate.

3.4 The inspection in March 2022 identified a number of areas requiring significant improvement.

3.5 The Care Inspectorate use a Six-Point Scale for grading as follows:

Grading	Description
6	Outstanding or sector leading
5	Major strengths
4	Important strengths, with some areas for improvement
3	Strengths just outweigh weaknesses
2	Important weaknesses - priority action required
1	Major weaknesses - urgent remedial action required

3.6 The gradings provided by the Care Inspectorate in March 2022 were as follows:

Quality Indicator	Fostering	Adoption	Adult Placement
1.1	4	4	5
1.2	3	4	4
1.3	3	3	5
1.4	2	2	4
2.2	3	3	4
3.2	3	3	3
5.1	3	2	4

3.7 The outcome of the March 2022 inspection was presented to the Education, Children's & Leisure Services Committee (ECLS) on 14 December 2022 (para 5 of minute refers). A further progress report was requested which was presented to ECLS Committee on 19 April 2023 (para 8 of minute refers) in advance of the transfer to the Moray Integrated Joint Board (MIJB).

3.8 At the ECLS Committee on 19 April 2023 a number of areas of improvement and progress were outlined. These areas were being addressed within a Service Improvement Plan and included management stability, recruitment and retention of staff, training and induction for staff, improved processes and procedures, permanence planning, training for foster carers and adopters, and the approach towards foster carers who go on to adopt the children they care for.

3.9 It was reported to ECLS Committee on 19 April 2023 that it was hoped that this improvement work would result in a more positive outcome when the follow up inspection of fostering, adoption and adult placement by the Care Inspectorate was undertaken.

#### **4. KEY MATTERS RELEVANT TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 The Care Inspectorate undertook the anticipated follow up full inspection of Placement Services (fostering, adoption and adult placement) in June/July 2023.

4.2 Placement Services were notified by the Care Inspectorate on 10 May 2023 that it would be undertaking an inspection of fostering, adoption and adult placement commencing on 12 June 2023.

4.3 The Care Inspectorate identified that it was continuing with the new style of hybrid inspection as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

- 4.4 This new model provided Placement Services with four weeks in order to gather documents and information requested by the Care Inspectorate. This was then followed by four weeks of the inspection. The first week of the inspection was an off-site reading week, with the second and third weeks comprising online and face to face meetings, where appropriate, with young people, carers and staff.
- 4.5 The inspection was undertaken by two inspectors. There was a positive working relationship with the inspectors with effective communication via telephone, email and weekly catch up meetings. It was reported by young people, carers and staff that the inspectors were professional and respectful.
- 4.6 The Care Inspectorate assessed Placement Services against seven quality indicators set out in “A quality framework for fostering, adoption and adult placement services” (May 2021) (**Appendix 1**).
- 4.7 In the four weeks of preparation time, Placement Services formed a task and finish working group with the purpose of gathering, collating, reviewing and sending documents and information to the Care Inspectorate. This group then oversaw the process and management of the four week inspection process itself.
- 4.8 The working group undertook its role successfully where the Care Inspectorate praised Placement Service’s open, transparent and organised approach to the inspection.
- 4.9 The Care Inspectorate provided initial verbal feedback on 6 July 2023. Placement Services were provided with the draft inspection reports with an opportunity to provide feedback to the Care Inspectorate prior to final publication.
- 4.10 The final reports are attached for the Fostering Service (**Appendix 2**), the Adoption Service (**Appendix 3**) and Adult Placement (**Appendix 4**).
- 4.11 The gradings provided by the Care Inspectorate for the June/July 2023 are as follows:

Quality Indicator	Fostering	Adoption	Adult Placement
1.1	4	5	5
1.2	4	5	4
1.3	4	4	5
1.4	4	4	4
2.2	4	4	4
3.2	4	4	4
5.1	4	4	4

4.12 In this table the colour coding key is:

- (i) amber indicates grade maintained from March 2022
- (ii) green indicates grade improved from March 2022

- 4.13 The feedback from the Care Inspectorate identified that this inspection was a significant improvement on the March 2022 inspection.
- 4.14 The table in 4.11 identifies that the fostering service improved in six areas and maintained progress in one; it was also able to improve Quality Indicator 1.4 by two grades from 2 to 4. The adoption service improved in all seven areas and was also able to improve Quality Indicators 1.4 and 5.1 by two grades both from 2 to 4. The adult placement service maintained progress in six areas and improved in one.
- 4.15 Overall, this was a positive outcome where the fostering service and the adoption were assessed as having made significant improvements and progress. Most significantly, the fostering and adoption services were no longer graded as either 2 (Weak) or 3 (Adequate) in any areas. The adult placement service was assessed as having maintained progress with this being from a higher starting point than the foster and adoption services.
- 4.16 In the final inspection reports in respect of fostering, adoption and adult placement the Care Inspectorate gave all three services each an overall grade of 4 (Good) in all areas.
- 4.17 In the final feedback the Care Inspectorate identified that although there had been significant progress, it was too soon to assess whether this change was fully embedded. It indicated that this would be the focus of the next inspection of fostering, adoption and adult placement. The Care Inspectorate identified that areas for improvement included, for example, maintaining relationships between siblings who are not placed together and ensuring that tracking systems are in place to monitor outcomes.
- 4.18 Following the inspection, Placement Services has continued its improvement activity via the ongoing Service Improvement Working Group. This is a working group which oversees a programme of continuous improvement via a Service Improvement Plan (SIP).
- 4.19 Placement Services is committed to continuing the progress identified by the Care Inspectorate in the inspection of June/July 2023. This will include embedding current progress and identifying stretch aims via the SIP. In this respect, Placement Services identifies itself as a learning service with a focus on continuous improvement.

## **5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

### **(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP)) and Moray Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan “Partners in Care 2022 – 2032”**

The Corporate Plan 2024 makes a commitment to improving outcomes for Moray’s most vulnerable young people and families and that more children will live with their families, being cared for in strong safe, communities across Moray.

**(b) Policy and Legal**

The Care Inspectorate assessed Placement Services against seven quality indicators set out in “A quality framework for fostering, adoption and adult placement services” (May 2021) (Appendix 1).

**(c) Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications.

**(d) Risk Implications and Mitigation**

There are no risk implications and mitigation.

**(e) Staffing Implications**

There are no staffing implications.

**(f) Property**

There are no property implications.

**(g) Equalities/Socio Economic**

There are no implications in relation to equalities/socio economic impact.

**(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts**

There are no climate change or biodiversity impacts.

**(i) Directions**

None.

**(j) Consultations**

Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Moray; Chief Social Work Officer & Head of Service; Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development; Chief Financial Officer; Caroline O'Connor, Committee Services Officer and the Equal Opportunities Officer have been consulted in the preparation of this report and are in agreement with the content relating to their areas of responsibility.

**6. CONCLUSION**

**6.1 It is recommended that the Committee scrutinise and note the outcome of the full inspection of Placement Services (fostering, adoption and adult placement) by the Care Inspectorate in June/July 2023.**

Author of Report: Carl Campbell, Service Manager  
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