



**REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE ON
13 FEBRUARY 2019**

SUBJECT: MORAY FOSTERING AND ADOPTION PANEL REVIEW 2018

**BY: ACTING CORPORATE DIRECTOR (EDUCATION AND SOCIAL
CARE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the work undertaken by the Moray Fostering and Adoption Panel during the period January to December 2018.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (D) (2) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to exercising the functions of the Council as Social Work Authority within the terms of relevant legislation with regard to Fostering and Adoption.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that Committee scrutinises and notes the work of the Moray Fostering and Adoption Panel in the period January to December 2018.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Consistent with previous reporting, the Moray Fostering and Adoption Panel has meetings scheduled monthly, with agreement for additional meetings to be arranged to respond to increased workload.
- 3.2 The functions of the Panel have been revised and approved by Committee on 23 August 2017 (paragraph 12 of the minute refers).
- 3.3 The composition of the Panel provides a wide range of knowledge and experience in relation to children separated from their families, allowing different perspectives on these matters to be obtained. The membership of the Panel at December 2018 can be found at **APPENDIX 1**. Within the year there have been limited changes to membership. There have been recent enquires made by people expressing interest in joining the panel and due process will be applied.

- 3.4 The work of the Panel this year has been lighter. This is being audited and monitored.
- 3.5 In relation to adoption, the panel considered the following during the year: -
- Recommendation and subsequent approval of 2 new prospective adoptive families. This is a reduction in 5 based on the year 2017.
 - There are 4 families awaiting adoptive placements.
 - Recommendation and approval for 6 children in need of permanence through adoption. This is an increase in 1 child based on the year 2017.
 - Matching of 4 children with prospective adoptive families, this is a decrease from 8 in 2017.
 - In addition to 4 children having been matched direct processes are underway for 2 children.
- 3.6 In relation to fostering, the panel considered the following during the year: -
- Recommendation and subsequent approval of 2 foster families, a decrease of 5 in 2017.
 - Recommendation and subsequent approval of 3 children in need of permanence through foster care; this is an increase in 2 from 2017.
 - Recommendation and subsequent approval of 0 children for matching with a permanent foster family, a reduction from 3 in 2017.
 - An update and/or review of 7 fostering families. The nature of review and change is concerned with foster carers who: -
 - apply to adopt;
 - change approval from offering temporary care to offering permanent care;
 - increase or decrease their approval in relation to the numbers of children for whom they foster.
 - In addition to the above this year the panel has recommended for approval 2 families who now offer continuing care for Young People for whom they have fostered.
 - Of note, the issue of emergency variation to approval is growing and generating more work for panel. This will be subject to scrutiny in terms of auditing whether the original approval is appropriate. The next annual report will have advice of outcome of audit.
 - (vi) De-registration – there were 9 fostering families who were deregistered because they retired, moved away or specific reason to themselves, this is a decrease of 1 from 10 in 2017.
- 3.7 The detail of the past 7 years is contained in the table at **APPENDIX 2**.
- 3.8 Previous reporting to Committee has referred to evidence of fluctuation in numbers of children being matched with their future permanent carers. This year the number of 4 children being matched is the lowest number within the 7 year period being reported.
- 3.9 Reported to Committee 7 March 2018 (paragraph 16 of the minute refers), to apply consistency in analysing drift and detail, Moray has committed to the Permanence and Care Excellence programme (PACE). The PACE programme is run jointly with the Centre for Excellence for Looked after

Children in Scotland (CELCIS) and the Scottish Government. It applies an improvement methodology from the basis that delay is not the responsibility of any one agency, multiagency partners are actively included in PACE.

- 3.10 Data analysis of run charts from April 2018 identified Moray's areas for improvement. The target times will be revisited given some slippage. At September they had been agreed as follows: -

Aim 1	Aim 2	Aim 3	Aim 4
By 30 September 2018, 100% of children looked after at home for more than 2 years from 1 June 2018, will undergo a peer review that will be reported to the Service & Team Managers.	By 1 July 2019, 90% of looked after & accommodated children, accommodated on or after 1 June 2018, will have a recommendation for permanence within 30 weeks.	By 1 July 2019, 60% of children who have had a recommendation for permanence away from home from 1 June 2018, will be presented to the Fostering & Adoption Panel within 15 weeks.	By 1 July 2019, 60% of children from 1 June 2018, who have an agency approved permanence plan to be secured via a Permanence Order, will have the order lodged within 16 weeks of the agency decision date.

As noted these will be reworked early in January 2019.

- 3.11 Business panel meetings continue to be held every 6 months. The focus is the work of the panel, training needs and development. Specific issues of note include: -
- (i) How children's needs progress through court, having been at panel. In 2018 there were 2 Permanence Orders with Authority to adopt (POAs) and 6 Permanence Orders (POs) granted in 2018. 2 cases were withdrawn. Currently in court are 2 POs and 1 POA.
 - (ii) As noted, development and continuous improvement is a key aspect of business meetings. To this outcome a draft induction pack and timeline for new Panel members has been prepared and circulated for comment. This will be finalised ahead of the next business meeting in March.
- 3.12 The report to Committee on 2 March 2016 (para 15 of the minute refers) and 7 March 2017 (para 16 of the minute refers) noted actions associated with having identified a rise in foster and adoption placements breaking down. The audit into the unplanned endings concluded; the report was considered within Integrated Children Services and action has been taken in terms of the recommendations for practice. Outstanding recommendations will be reflected within an action plan and improvement methodology applied to audit impact.

4. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

(a) **Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**

There continues to be coherence with the work of the Fostering and Adoption Panel and the priorities within Moray 2026: - ambitious and confident young people - improving the life chances of children by supporting them, and their families, at the earliest possible stages and as required thereafter, to give all children in Moray the best possible opportunities to achieve their potential.

It is also linked to the Corporate Priority – More of our children have a better start to life and are ready to succeed.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Moray Fostering and Adoption Panel have procedural guidelines in accordance with Scottish Government guidance and regulations. The Panel make recommendations to the Education and Social Care Department for the payment of adoption allowances under the Adoption Support and Allowances (Scotland) Regulations 2009.

(c) Financial implications

There are no financial implications directly associated with this report. There are implications for the out of area budget where there is matching with independent providers and there are costs associated with taking forward court cases in geographically distant areas as legal work requires to be outsourced.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no specific risks associated with this report.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no specific staffing implications associated with this report.

(f) Property

The report has no property implications.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

There are no equality implications associated with this report.

(h) Consultations

The Education and Social Care Senior Management Team, Katrina McGillivray Senior Human Resources Advisor; Paul Connor, Principal Accountant; Payments Manager; Legal Services Manager, (Litigation and Licensing); Children's Wellbeing Manager; Equal Opportunities Officer; Placement Services Manager and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer have been consulted in the preparation of this report and are in agreement as regards to their respective responsibilities.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Consistent with previous reporting, Moray Fostering and Adoption Panel continue to play a key role in the scrutiny of prospective adopters and foster carers who wish to be approved by Moray Council. The Panel also scrutinises care plans for children and young people in need of permanent care away from home either through adoption or permanent foster care. The statistics recorded within this report will continue to be presented annually. The detail that will present from engaging with the PACE programme will help to identify areas for improvement which should positively impact on drift and delay in care planning for children.**

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Background Papers:
Ref: