



---

**REPORT TO: SPECIAL EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 14 DECEMBER 2022**

**SUBJECT: INSPECTION OF FOSTERING, ADOPTION AND ADULT PLACEMENTS MARCH 2022**

**BY: CHIEF OFFICER, HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE MORAY**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 This report is submitted to Committee to provide an update on the process and outcome of the inspection of Placement Services in March 2022. Specifically, this was in relation to fostering, adoption and adult placements. Members are asked to take note of the information contained within.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 **It is recommended that Committee scrutinises and notes the outcome of the inspection of fostering, adoption and adult placements in March 2022.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Fostering, adoption and adult placements are inspected on a regular basis by the Care Inspectorate with the previous inspection being undertaken in March 2019. The inspection in March 2022 was delayed as a result of Covid-19 pandemic.
- 3.2 For information, adult placements is a service where young people remain in the same placement when they turn eighteen. This provides continuity and stability for young people and supports better transitions from childhood to adulthood.

**4. PREPARATION FOR AND PROCESS OF THE INSPECTION**

- 4.1 Placement Services was notified by the Care Inspectorate on 28-01-22 that it would be undertaking an inspection of fostering, adoption and adult

placements on 21-02-22. This was a full inspection of these registered services and comprised two separate inspection processes, that is, (i) fostering and adult placements and (ii) adoption.

- 4.2 The Care Inspectorate identified that this was a new style of hybrid inspection as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic and that Placement Services was one of the first council's to be inspected under this model.
- 4.3 This new model provided Placement Services with three weeks in order to gather documents and information requested by the Care Inspectorate. This was then followed by three weeks of the inspection itself. The first week of the inspection was an off-site reading week with the second and third weeks comprising online meetings and face to face meetings, where appropriate, with young people, carers and staff.
- 4.4 The inspection was undertaken by three inspectors and a further inspector in training. There was a positive working relationship with the inspectors where there was 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.
- 4.5 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**).
- 4.6 In the three 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 three week inspection process itself.
- 4.7 The working group undertook its role successfully where the Care Inspectorate praised Placement Service's open, transparent and organised approach to the inspection.

## **5. OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION**

- 5.1 The Care Inspectorate provided initial verbal feedback on 18-03-22. Placement Services were provided with the draft inspection reports with an opportunity to provide feedback to the Care Inspectorate prior to final publication.
- 5.2 The final reports are attached for the Fostering Service (**APPENDIX 2**) and the Adoption Service (**APPENDIX 3**).
- 5.3 The gradings provided by the Care Inspectorate were as follows:

Quality Indicator	Fostering	Adoption	Continuing Care
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

5.4 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

- 5.5 The feedback from the Care Inspectorate was positive in relation to the staff team and their commitment towards vulnerable individuals and families. It highlighted that the voice of young people was heard and carers had a good relationship with social work staff. The Care Inspectorate also highlighted examples of particular good practice in adult placement services.
- 5.6 The Care Inspectorate identified that there was a culture of change in the service and that it knew itself well and was clear about the areas that needed development and improvement. The Care Inspectorate acknowledged that Placement Services and, more widely, Children's Services was going through a period of change and undertaking a programme of transformation.
- 5.7 However, there was a number of significant areas where the feedback was poor and where, overall, Placement Services did not improve on its previous inspection.
- 5.8 There was a focus on inconsistent compliance with processes and procedures which was resulting with delays in the permanence planning for children. In the fostering team there were delays in progressing fostering assessments and inadequate training for carers. It was identified that the team lacked depth of experience which was amplified by recent high staff turnover. In the adoption team the work with concurrency (fosters carers who then adopt) did not reflect the best practice model and post adoption support required significant development and improvement.

- 5.9 In addition to this, the Care Inspectorate highlighted that the recent changes in senior management and the challenges of having interim management posts had resulted in uncertainty and drift in service development.
- 5.10 The Care Inspectorate identified that it would be seeking an update on progress which is likely to be in early to mid-2023.

## **6. DEVELOPMENT AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT**

- 6.1 The outcome of the inspection was not unexpected as considerable quality assurance work had been undertaken in the preceding months via an improvement plan. Placement Services had previously identified that processes and procedures were an area of development and work had begun in relation to this prior to the inspection. This was noted by the Care Inspectorate and, as stated previously, was placed within a wider programme of transformation in Children's Services.
- 6.2 Following the inspection, Placement Services formed a Service Improvement Plan Working Group. This is an ongoing working group which is overseeing a programme of continuous improvement via a Service Improvement Plan, focussed on the areas requiring improvement from the inspection. A summary of the Service Improvement Plan is attached to this report (**APPENDIX 4**). This summary outlines the 'Requirements' and 'Areas for Improvement' as identified by the Care Inspectorate. The full Service Improvement Plan contains other areas of development not identified by the Care Inspectorate.
- 6.3 The Service Improvement Plan Working Group reported back to the Care Inspectorate in June 2022 with an update on the key improvement requirements. There have been no issues raised by the Care Inspectorate in relation to this initial progress report.
- 6.4 The Service Improvement Plan has RAG rated the progress of all the 'Requirements' and 'Areas for Improvement' as identified by the Care Inspectorate. These areas will be subject to a 6 month review on 13-01-23 where there will be a further RAG rating process in relation to implementation and how well they have been embedded into Placement Services. This review and RAG rating programme will continue for the 'Requirements' and 'Areas for Improvement' but also for the other areas of development identified within the Service Improvement Plan.
- 6.5 As highlighted previously, the Service Improvement Plan Working Group is ongoing with no end date and is part of a programme of continuous improvement. This is a fortnightly meeting which is able to identify areas of development but also to highlight, at any early stage, if there areas of development which are not progressing as we would hope and rectify these.

- 6.6 The inspection in March 2022 has supported the programme of learning and improvement already underway in Placement Services and in Children's Services. In this respect it has been a supportive process and has reassured the service that its programme of learning and improvement is on the correct path. This is a key function of the inspection process and has been welcomed by Placement Services and Children's Services.

## **7. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

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

The work of Placement Services is underpinned by the Children's Services Plan with particular attention to Priority 4 "The outcomes and life chances of looked after and care experienced children and young people are improved". This links in, and is consistent with, the wider Corporate Plan for Moray Council.

The work of Placement Services is sighted on and committed to upholding the principles of keeping The Promise and the UNCRC Incorporation Bill. It is seeking to develop its role in line with The Promise and the importance of children's rights particularly in regards to having a good childhood and to hear the voice of children, young people and their families. There are no contraventions of child's rights to consider as part of this report.

### **(b) Policy and Legal**

Placement Services has statutory procedural guidelines in accordance with Scottish Government guidance and regulations.

### **(c) Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

### **(d) Risk Implications**

There are no specific risk implications associated with this report.

### **(e) Staffing Implications**

There are no staffing implications associated with this report.

### **(f) Property**

There are no property implications associated with this report.

### **(g) Equalities/Socio-Economic Impact**

There are no equalities/socio-economic implications associated with this report.

### **(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impact**

None

**(i) Consultations**

The Head of Children and Families and Criminal Justice Social Work, Panel Advisor, Chief Officer Health and Social Care, Equal Opportunities Officer, Senior Human Resources Advisor, Principal Accountant, Legal Services Manager and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer have been consulted with any comments received incorporated into this report.

**8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The purpose of this report is to request that the Committee note the outcome of the inspection of fostering, adoption and adult placements in March 2022.**
- 8.2 Placement Services is undertaking a process of learning and improvement via the Service Improvement Plan overseen by the associated working group. This work has been supported and reinforced by the inspection in March 2022 of fostering, adoption and adult placements.**
- 8.3 The progress of Placement Services will continue to be presented to the Education, Children's & Leisure Services Committee.**

Author of Report: Carl Campbell, Service Manager, Children and Families and  
Justice Social Work  
Ref: SPMAN-305227695-28