



REPORT TO: EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE ON 3 FEBRUARY 2021

SUBJECT: INFORMATION REPORT: - PERMANENCE AND CARE EXCELLENCE (PACE)

BY: CHIEF OFFICER, HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the work and the outcome of the work undertaken as part of the Permanence and Care Excellence Programme (PACE).
- 1.2 This report is submitted to the Education, Communities and Organisational Development Committee following a decision of Moray Council on 17 June 2020 to agree a simplified committee structure as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the case of this committee the combining of the delegated responsibilities of Children and Young People Services, Governance, Strategy and Performance, (para 9 of the minute refers).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Permanence and Care Excellence (PACE) programme was run jointly by the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS) and the Scottish Government and it began in Scotland in 2014.
- 2.2 The aim of the programme was to enable more looked after children to experience permanence without drift and delay in their care planning.
- 2.3 The programme applied an improvement methodology from the basis that delay in care planning for children and young people was not the responsibility of any one agency.
- 2.4 All local authorities had the opportunity to engage with the programme between 2014 and December 2018. The project closed during 2020, however working practices in Moray will continue to work with the Quality Improvement methodology principles applied within PACE, reflected in the Children's Services Plan.
- 2.5 The annual reviews to Committee reporting on the work of the Fostering and Adoption Panel confirmed the commitment by Moray to the Permanence and Care Excellence programme (PACE); advised of the agreed aims; the need for revision to those aims given some delay and then of the sense of progress made. 7 March 2018 (paragraph 16 of the minute refers); 13 February 2019

(paragraph 9 of the minute refers); 4 March 2020 (paragraph 19 of the minute refers) and is referred to again within that for 3 February 2021.

- 2.6 The report to Committee 3 April 2019 (para 18 of the minute refers) Care Inspectorate report – “Services for Children and Young People in Moray March 2019 – progress review following inspection return” also advised that “partners had engaged with CELCIS as part of the PACE programme and were using improvement methodology to prevent drift and delay. That report noted the early stages but the potential to improve outcomes for this group of young people”.
- 2.7 The aims of PACE for Moray, based on audit and analysis of our statistics in 2017 and 2018 were 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.

The dates for aims 2, 3 and 4 were revised given delays in starting with the programme. Rather than “by 1 July 2019” the date became “by 1 December 2019” and the % rate for aim 2 was changed from 90% to 85%.

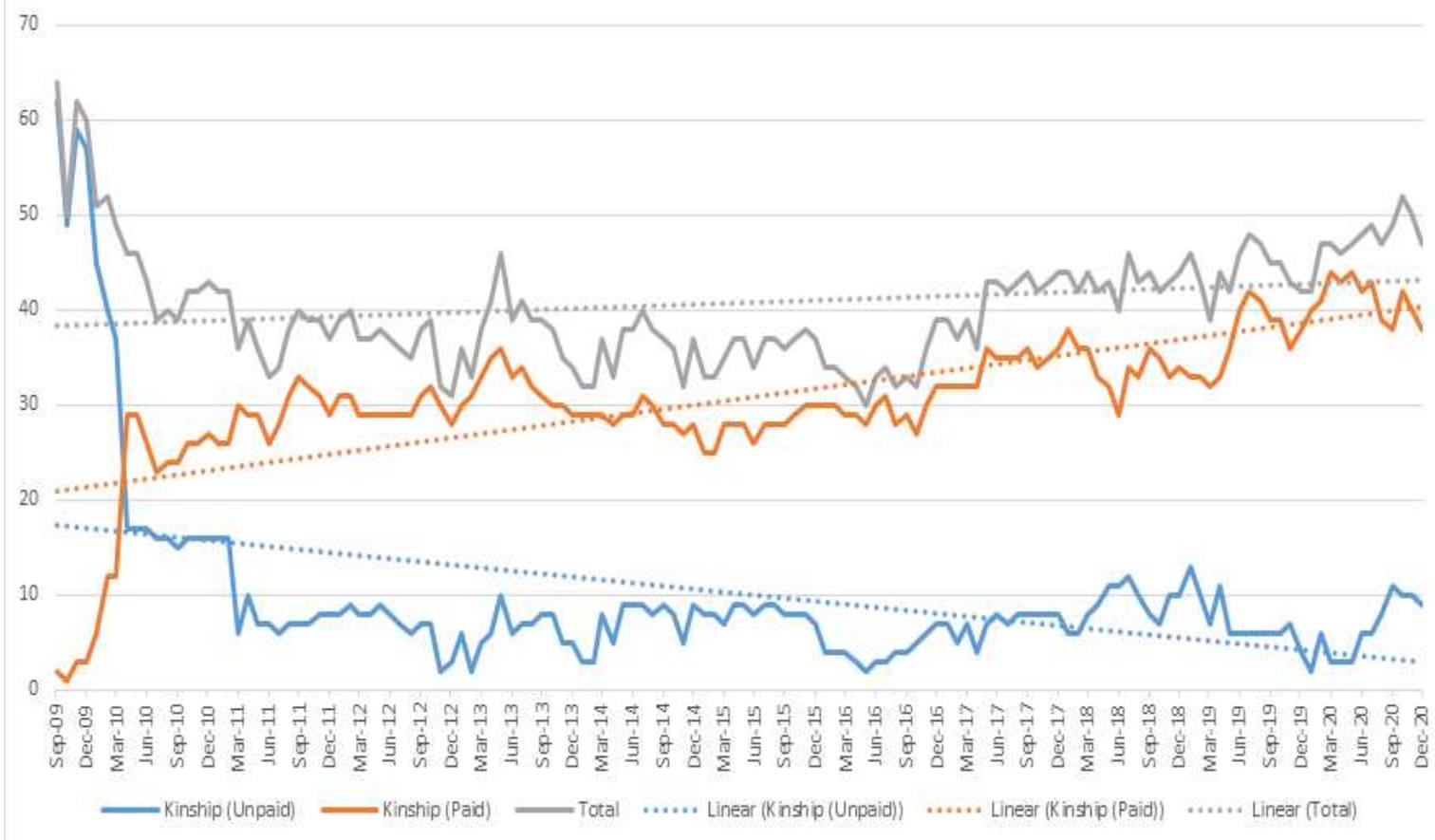
- 2.8 The delays were about those involved with PACE really engaging with the improvement methodology. It took time to understand what was meant by plan, do, study, act – and the need for tests and the ability to read and interpret the run charts. One of the main features for practice moving forward was the appreciation of learning about quality improvement methodology. All involved in the programme has developed that understanding of the benefit in testing prior to roll out. Using the Quality Improvement methodology was fundamental in helping understand the systems and processes involved in what is the care journey that young people experience. It helped identify where improvements needed to be made. This whole systems approach provided a focus and framework. The learning from using improvement methodology is key in many projects and programmes. For the Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative in 2019 Moray presented the storyboard attached at **APPENDIX I**. This storyboard reflects what had been our learning at that time.
- 2.9 The story board refers to the 2 week planning meeting which was one of the key tests that Moray embraced. It is considered that the 2 week planning meeting, held when a child has become looked after and which is in addition to formal statutory meetings, makes a positive difference. It focusses on why care is needed: what needs to change: who needs to be supported to make change; which outcomes will be achieved. Parents’ feedback that they feel much more involved and actively part of planning. It is considered that this is helping children to return to parental care more quickly than they might have

otherwise. Following process of governance this is now going to be embedded as practice across Moray.

- 2.10 The run charts, **APPENDIX II** show the data. So for aim 2 the chart reflects that there was the beginning of a trend, prior to lockdown. This is reflected too in aim 3.
- 2.11 The general sense is that Moray was making comparatively positive progress evidencing outcomes for looked after children in terms of achieving permanence. However numbers are small and there has been the impact of covid 19 in that all existing cases were sisted from March until August and no new cases were able to be lodged in that period.
- 2.12 There have been other benefits of engaging with PACE and the improvement methodology. One issue is that workers and families actively consider kinship care placements when care with parents is not appropriate. However this was not tested and so cannot be confirmed as definitely being an outcome of engagement with PACE. Kinship care is a care destination in itself. The original aims of PACE were focussed on the timing of decisions being made to secure legal orders or children returning to parental care; the aims did not reflect permanence for children in kinship placements. The numbers of Moray's children in kinship care arrangements had been fairly static between 2009 and 2017. The following graph shows the trend lines for children staying with extended family. The increase in kinship care is indicated prior to our engagement with PACE, but it is more pronounced following engagement with PACE.

The high figures pre. 2009 are prior to the launch of the formal Kinship Care scheme and are attributed to inconsistent record keeping. Following the onset of the scheme kinship numbers were consistent, until engagement with PACE, when over the last 3 years the number of young people in formal Kinship has risen.

Kinship Care - Sept 2009 to date



2.13 Consistent with the outcome of the Care Review, it is important to know what support the family had before the child became looked after and to develop resources and supports to help maintain children in their families. Numbers of children; nature of need and the length of time that children are supported before they are looked after will be audited within the PACE group.

2.14 Examples of resources that are considered to make a helpful difference and support children to remain with their parents will include family group decision making; group work that is responsive and flexible; and a strengths based approach to working with families. Moving forward, using improvement methodology, a rights based approach will be at the centre of all activity.

2.15 Consistent with the goals of PACE which is to prevent drift and delay in care planning, with flexible and responsive community based resources children are more likely to remain in the care of the families where it is safe for them to do so. For those children who need to be cared for out with their family, permanent care should be achieved with minimal delay and minimum change in care placements.

3. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

The Children's Services plan 2020/23 identifies improving outcomes for looked after children as a key priority the Children and Families and Justice Social Work service improvement plan identifies actions to be taken to support these improvements the Corporate plan (2020 update) identifies the following priorities:

Work with families as partners to give their children the kind of lives they want them to lead so that children grow up to be strong and resilient; Improve the life chances and outcomes for care experienced children and young people Improvement in children and young people's health and well-being.

(b) Policy and Legal

Moray Council has statutory duties to looked after children in terms of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The child's welfare is the paramount consideration and ensuring that children can achieve permanent care destinations as quickly as possible, including a return home if appropriate, is a key factor in meeting a child's welfare needs.

(c) Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report: the indirect risk is cost associated with children being cared for in the wrong placement which can be financially costly to the system.

(d) Risk Implications

There is risk of delay in planning permanence because of limits around covid 19, which may impact on the timing for assessing the needs of children and for those needs being presented to court. This delay would be inconsistent with the aims of PACE and the findings of the Care Review: the Promise.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no direct staffing implications associated with this report.

(f) Property

There are no direct property implications associated with this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

The purpose of the report is to update elected members on progress and therefore no EIA is needed.

(h) Consultations

Chief Executive, Moray Council; Chief Social Work Officer; Head of Service, Children & Families & Criminal Justice Services; Senior Human Resources Adviser; Principal Accountant, Morag Smith, Senior Solicitor, Tracey Sutherland, 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.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Engaging with the improvement methodology has resulted in signs of progress however given small numbers and then the impact of covid, further time is needed to evidence improvement.

4.2 A further report will be submitted to Committee on an annual basis, timing of which will tie with the report on the annual review of the foster and adoption panel.

Author of Report:

Background Papers:

Ref: