

**REPORT TO: CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE ON
14 APRIL 2010**

SUBJECT: INSPECTION OF MORAY ADOPTION SERVICE

BY: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to invite the Children and Young People's Services Committee to scrutinise and note the inspection of Moray's Adoption Service by the Care Commission which was completed on 9 February 2010. A brief summary of the inspection report is provided at **APPENDIX 1** to this report.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to the exercising of functions under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Children and Young People's Services Committee note and scrutinise the content of the inspection into the Moray Adoption Service.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Moray Adoption Service provides an adoption service for children and assessed as being in need of permanent care away from home and recruits and supports carers to provide adoption placements.
- 3.2 The service was registered by the Care Commission on 2 December 2005.
- 3.3 Inspectors reported on two quality indicators and the evaluation for the Moray Adoption Service are as follows: -
- Quality of Care and Support 5 – Very Good
 - Quality of Staffing 5 – Very Good
- 3.4 Inspectors reported on these quality indicators using the six point scale: -
- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Excellent | Outstanding, sector leading |
| Very Good | Major Strengths |
| Good | Important strengths, some areas for improvement |
| Satisfactory | Strengths just outweigh weaknesses |
| Weak | Important weaknesses |
| Unsatisfactory | Major weaknesses |
- 3.5 The full inspection report is available in the Member's Library.

- 3.6 There were no requirements or recommendations identified within the Inspection report.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Single Outcome Agreement /Service Improvement Plan

Service developments will continue to be made and recorded and addressed within the Moray Adoption Service Performance Improvement Plan.

(b) Policy and Legal

There are no direct policy or legal implications associated with this report.

(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)

There are no direct resource implications associated with this report.

(d) Consultations

Deborah Brands, Principal Accountant, Rhona Gunn, Acting Principal Solicitor (Litigation and Licensing) and Katrina McGillivray, Senior Personnel Advisor have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 That the Committee scrutinises and notes the contents of this report.

Author of Report: Jennifer Gordon, Placement Services Manager
Background Papers: in Member's Library
Ref: HB757355

Moray Adoption Service

There were no requirements or recommendations in the last Inspection report.

The Inspection report advises of the following: -

What the service does well

- Management and staff continually strive to make improvements to their service provision.
- Management and staff are dedicated to their work.
- The assessments carried out within the adoption service are of a high quality.
- Staff work well as a team and support each other.
- Senior staff and management support staff.
- Training for adopters was well selected and of benefit. For example, the 'Piece of Cake' training from Adoption UK during 2009 had been a great success.

What the service could do better

- The service provider to take account of the consultation report and action the points identified.
- The service provider to continue to progress the post adoption support agreement.
- Policies and procedures to be reviewed in line with the forthcoming new Scottish Government Legislation. The working group set up to review the Permanence procedures to progress this and facilitate the necessary training.
- The service provider to continue to gain the views of people who use the adoption service.
- The Adoption Act working group to review and update the Moray Council.

What the service has done since the last inspection

- The working group being considered at the last inspection had been established.
- There were now 2 dedicated social workers for the adoption service.
- Questionnaires had been reviewed and acted upon.
- An independent evaluation of the service provision had been carried out by Children 1st about which the inspectors made specific positive comment given the comprehensive and detailed evaluation.
- Additional funding had been secured to confirm a full time social work post and to fund two full time respite carers used primarily in support of mainstream placement. Additional administration support had been allocated to the service in recognition of the considerable expansion

Particular strengths of the service identified within Inspection process

As part of the process of inspection the inspectors spoke with service users and were told that service users feel able to express their views and that staff are very willing to listen and take suggestions on board. Inspectors found evidence within case files that prospective adopters are active partners in the assessment and approval processes.

Inspectors accessed the Adoption Forum Report. The Moray Council's adoption forum meets quarterly. It provides adopters with opportunities to share common issues and issue raised within are taken forward by the staff who support the

functioning of the forum and fed back to the management team for consideration and action.

Based on discussion with management and staff and intended to improve services to both children and their carers Inspectors considered the outcome of the restructuring exercise within which two members of the fostering and adoption team have taken on key responsibilities for the delivery of the adoption service.

The 'Piece of Cake' training from Adoption UK, specifically for adopters held during 2009 had received a very positive response. This training was provided by adopters with the aim of both providing direct support and empowering participants to engage in service improvements as a result of their involvement. The outcome from both adopters who took part and from Adoption UK was very positive.

With regard to safer recruitment practices Inspectors found that the policies and procedures they saw, demonstrated most of the aspects of Safer Recruitment, including checking professional registers. They found that the Moray Council Adoption service has clear decision making processes for when any issues arise with any references.

Positive report was made in relation to implementation of the Induction Process for new staff. During interview by the Inspectors a recently recruited social worker described the Induction as a very positive experience. Comments are noted within the Inspection report.

Areas for Improvement

Strengths were identified within the recent consultation so too were areas for action. Inspectors record that the Moray Council Adoption Service should further evidence that the areas identified in the report are actioned and that liaison with services users should continue with attention on the impact of restructuring and improvements for service provision.

Inspectors confirmed the need of the service to review policies and procedures when Scottish Government guidance relating to recent legislation is final, this would include progressing the post adoption support agreement format for future adoption placements.

Staff and management had indicated that consideration was being given to how best to involve people who use the adoption service. Inspectors identified this as an area for improvement and report that the service provider should continue to develop ways in which people can participate.

While the recent restructuring was reported in positive terms Inspectors confirmed our need to monitor the impact on service delivery and staff and they recommended change where necessary, based on analysis and feedback.

Conclusion

The Inspectors concluded that Moray Council's Adoption Service was delivering a very good service. They concluded that all staff worked well together and were supported by their management. They concluded that assessments were being carried out within timescales and that the quality was very good. They concluded,

having spoken with people who used the service that service users are very happy with the way in which staff deliver the service.

Enforcement

There has been no enforcement action against this service since the last inspection.

Requirements

None identified at this inspection.

Recommendations

None identified at this inspection.

Evaluations

Current Grades

Quality of Care and Support	5	Very Good
Statement 1 5 - Very Good		
Statement 5 5 - Very Good		
Quality of Staffing	5	Very Good
Statement 1 4 - Good		
Statement 2 6 – Excellent		
Quality of Management and Leadership		Not Assessed

Grading History

2 Mar 2009 Announced		
Quality of Care and support	4	Good
Quality of Staffing	4	Good
Quality of Management and Leadership	4	Good

Authority Commentary

This is an extremely positive report which acknowledges a number of developments made in regard to design and delivery of the service, consultation and liaison with service users and commitment of team members. Areas for improvement will be monitored to reflect on strategies for continued service development.

There was no specific action plan required because there were no specific requirements/ recommendations arising from the inspection.