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**REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE ON  
2 MARCH 2016**

**SUBJECT: MORAY FOSTERING AND ADOPTION PANEL REVIEW 2015**

**BY: 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 2015.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III C (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 2015.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Moray Fostering and Adoption Panel meets on a monthly basis with additional meetings associated with any increased workload. The functions of the Panel remain as reported to Committee on 4 February 2015 (paragraph 19 of the minute refers).
- 3.2 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 2015 can be found at **APPENDIX 1**. This reflects 4 new Panel members within the past year.
- 3.3 In relation to adoption the Panel considered the following during the year: -
- (i) Recommendation and subsequent approval of 6 new prospective adoptive families. There are 2 families awaiting adoptive placements.
  - (ii) Recommendation and subsequent approval of 6 children in need of permanence through adoption.
  - (iii) Matching of 9 children with prospective adoptive families.

- 3.4 In relation to fostering the Panel considered the following during the year: -
- (i) Recommendation and subsequent approval of 4 foster families.
  - (ii) Recommendation and subsequent approval of 7 children in need of permanence through foster care.
  - (iii) Recommendation and subsequent approval of 11 children for matching with a permanent foster family. Of those matched, 3 of the 11 were matched with independent foster care providers; the remaining 8 were matched with Moray Council approved foster or kinship carers.
  - (iv) An update and/or review of 16 fostering families. 1 of the 16 fostering families reviewed have become permanent carers for 2 of the children indicated above.
- 3.5 The numbers of children in need of permanence through fostering or adoption, presented for consideration by the fostering and adoption panel, reduced from 28 last year to 13 this year. It has been noted that some years are busier than others and the evidence of the past 7 years is contained in the table at **APPENDIX 2.**
- 3.7 It should be noted that in total 20 children had their permanent care needs matched with their future care givers (fostering or adoption). This number is higher than any of the preceding years recorded. It reflects progress in securing children's futures. Drift and delay will be analysed and recorded in the next report.
- 3.8 The Moray Council continues to be a member of Scotland's Adoption Register. The register has experienced significant change given the charity which operated it on behalf of the Scottish Government, BAAF (British Association for Fostering and Adoption), closed on 31 July 2015. It is reported that the charity was insolvent and in administration. The Register continues to be funded by the Scottish Government and is currently hosted by St Andrew's Children's Society. The Register has a remit to facilitate family finding across Scotland with the aim of increasing the numbers of children that are placed for adoption.
- 3.9 The Foster and Adoption Panel continue to have business meetings not less than every 6 months. The key issues addressed this year have focussed on: -
- Welcoming new members to the Panel;
  - The new Child Adoption and Permanence Report (CAPR) which replaced the long standing form E for Children;
  - Consideration of training needs;
  - Self-evaluation; and
  - Options for changes in the remit of the panel in that the panel may move to consider assessments for kinships carers; these are currently approved using a different process.

- 3.10 As part of the process of inspection of the Fostering and Adoption Services the Inspector spoke with a number of the panel members. The following is taken directly from the Inspection report: -  
"The members of the Fostering Panel told us that they were happy with the way the service operated."

Panel members told us that they received good quality assessments and that this assisted with the Recommendation they ultimately made.

Comments noted included the following: -

"The assessments we receive from social workers are extremely detailed and well written."

"All paperwork is sent to us in plenty time to read prior to the meeting."

"Social workers are very knowledgeable about the cases they are presenting and this enables any questions we have to be answered."

"The panel works well and we support each other very well."

"We are always keen to get the views of all applicants or established foster carers about their experience about attending the panel. Feedback forms are completed and then we evaluate them to see what we can improve on."

#### **4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

##### **(a) Moray 2023: A Plan for the Future/Service Plan**

There continues to be coherence with the work of the Fostering and Adoption Panel and the priorities within Moray 2023.

##### **(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 associated with this report.

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

There are no risk implications arising from this report.

**(e) Staffing Implications**

There are no staffing implications associated with this report.

**(f) Property**

The report has no property implications.

**(g) Equalities**

There are no equality implications associated with this report.

**(h) Consultations**

Katrina McGillivray, Senior Human Resources Adviser; Deborah Brands, Principal Accountant; Margaret Forrest, Legal Services Manager (Litigation & Licensing); Don Toonen, Equal Opportunities Officer; Carole Carthew, Team Manager, (Placement Services) and Caroline Howie, Committee Services Officer have been consulted in the preparation of this report. Comments received have been incorporated within the report.

**5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 Consistent with previous reporting, Moray Fostering and Adoption Panel continues to play a key role in the scrutiny of prospective adopters and foster carers who wish to be approved by the 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 reflect increased progress in securing the permanent future care for Moray's most vulnerable children.**

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Background Papers:  
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