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**REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE ON  
13 DECEMBER 2017**

**SUBJECT: INSPECTION OF MORAY ADOPTION SERVICE**

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

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to invite the Committee to scrutinise and note the inspection of Moray's Adoption Service by the Care Inspectorate which was completed on 30 August 2017.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III D (2) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the exercising of the functions of the Council within the terms of relevant legislation with regard to Adoption.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-**

- (i) scrutinises and notes the content of the inspection report into the Moray Adoption Service; and**
- (ii) seeks an update report on the developments of the services no later than June 2018.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Moray Adoption Service provides an adoption service for children and young people assessed as being in need of permanent care away from home and recruits and supports adoptive families to provide adoption placements.
- 3.2 The aims of the service include the provision of a child centred approach which promotes the development, learning and achievement of each individual; quality, safe care in a family setting; an integral approach; appropriate qualified and trained social work and social care staff.
- 3.3 The service was previously registered with the Care Commission and transferred its registration to the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011.

3.4 The evaluation for the Moray Adoption Service is as follows: -

- Quality of Care and Support – 5 – Very Good\*
- Quality of Staffing 5 – Very Good
- Quality of Management and Leadership Not assessed

\*Inspectors report on quality indicators using a six point scale on which 5 - Very Good reflects major strengths.

3.5 A brief summary of the inspection report is provided at **APPENDIX 1** to this report. The full inspection report is available to view at the Care Inspectorate website via the link below which details the service strengths and areas for improvement identified during the Inspection.

<http://www.careinspectorate.com/>

3.6 There were no requirements and no recommendations arising from the inspection, and given this there is no formal action in response.

3.7 There are areas for improvement, consistent with those noted in the inspections of the fostering and supported lodgings services, which in the main correlate to changes in the structure within Placement Services. Inspections on the fostering and adoption services are the subject of separate reports to this Committee. Inspections on the Moray Fostering and Supported Lodging services are subject of separate reports to this Committee.

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

(a) **Moray 2026: A Plan for the Future and Moray Corporate Plan 2015 – 2017**

This subject links to the Moray 2026 plan – More ambitious and confident children and young people able to fulfil 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**

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

(c) **Financial implications**

There are no specific financial implications associated with this report. The implementation of the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007 resulted in increased requests for specific counselling. Changes will be made to the processes that apply for assessing and agreeing adoption support: costs will be met from existing budget. The position will continue to be monitored by officers.

(d) **Risk Implications**

There are no specific risk implications associated with this report.

**(e) Staffing Implications**

There are no specific staffing implications associated with this report.

**(f) Property**

There are no specific property implications associated with this report.

**(g) Equalities**

There are no issues in this case.

**(h) Consultations**

Corporate Director, (Education and Social Care); The Head of Integrated Children's Services; Head of Schools and Curriculum Development; Head of Lifelong Learning, Culture and Sport, Katrina McGillivray, Senior Human Resources Adviser; Deborah Brands, Principal Accountant; Margaret Forrest, Legal Services Manager (Litigation and Licensing); Equal Opportunities Officer and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer have been consulted in the preparation of this report. Comments received have been incorporated within the report.

**5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 That the Committee scrutinises and notes the contents of this report. As with previous Inspections this report acknowledges the commitment of team members, the developments made and the continuing very good delivery of the service. The process of inspection suggested how improvement to service might be made and a monitoring report will be sent to Inspectors by April 2018 and forwarded to Committee not later than June 2018.**

Author of Report: Jennifer Gordon, Corporate Parenting and Commissioning Manager

Background Papers: on Members' Portal  
Ref:

## APPENDIX 1

**Moray Adoption Service**

From the previous inspection which concluded 16 December 2015 there were no requirements and no recommendations.

**What the service does well**

The inspection report advised that this section of the report should be read in conjunction with the Fostering Report which was written after a joint inspection of this service was carried out.

- The Moray Council Adoption Service recruited and supported prospective adopters very well. Prospective adopters and adopters confirmed this when we spoke with them.
- Assessment reports were detailed and contained all relevant information relating to the suitability of families to become adopters.
- The assessment and preparation of adopters was of a very good quality. We could see that the process of linking and matching children clearly highlighted the strengths and vulnerabilities of potential matches.
- Prospective adopters and adopters spoke highly about the support they had received from social workers. Staff were clearly very dedicated and committed to provide the best service they could.
- Staff received supervision and training. However, we have identified this as an area for improvement in this report.

**What the service could do better**

Some areas we have identified in the findings of our inspection of the fostering service also apply to the adoption service.

- Although it was clear that staff within the adoption service were very skilled, experienced and dedicated in all areas of adoption, we found that morale was worryingly low. We believe this was due to structural changes, constrained budgets and unavoidable staff absences, which resulted in increasing workloads.
- Staff reported feeling overwhelmed and under significant pressure. However, we found that due to the diligence and dedication of staff this had not impacted on the quality of service provision.
- We found that there had been several unplanned endings for some children and that, in most instances; this could not have been avoided. However, we also found that if there was more interface between children and families social workers and adoption workers, this may have improved the situation.
- Staff received one to one supervision from the senior staff. We looked at records of supervision and found that this was an area that also needed to be improved on. Supervision, if it is to be meaningful, needs to be more considered. Social workers also told us that they found this to be the case. Annual appraisals had not been carried out. This needs to be addressed to ensure that all workers have their work appraised on an annual basis.
- The concerns above were recognised and accepted by the manager of the service, who had reviewed the service structure with the team and this was hoped to address our areas of concern. We found the plan to be a proactive attempt to address these concerns and change the service approach. The

'change management plan' was in the process of being implemented across the family placement service.

### **Conclusion**

Moray Adoption Service continues to provide a very good quality of service to people wishing to adopt children. The service provides very good support to prospective adopters and the quality of assessment reports presented to Moray adoption panel is of a very high standard. The areas suggested to make service improvement will be reported to Inspectors in April 2018 and to Committee no later than June 2018.

### **Enforcements**

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**

#### **Evaluations at August 2017**

Quality of Care and Support –	5 – Very Good
Quality of Staffing	5 – Very Good
Quality of Management and Leadership	Not Assessed

#### **Evaluations at December 2015**

Quality of Care and Support –	5 – Very Good
Quality of Staffing	5 – Very Good
Quality of Management and Leadership	5 – Very Good

#### **Evaluations at November 2014**

Quality of Care and Support	5 – Very Good
Quality of Staffing	5 – Very Good
Quality of Management and Leadership	5 – Very Good

#### **Evaluations at December 2013**

Quality of Care and Support	5 – Very Good
Quality of Staffing	5 – Very Good
Quality of Management and Leadership	4 – Good

Previous

#### **Evaluations at February 2011**

Quality of Care and Support	5 – Very Good
Quality of Staffing	Not assessed
Quality of Management and Leadership	Not Assessed

**Evaluations at February 2010**

Quality of Care and Support	5 – Very Good
Quality of Staffing	5 – Very Good
Quality of Management and Leadership	Not assessed

**Evaluations at March 2009**

Quality of Care and Support	4 – Very Good
Quality of Staffing	4 – Very Good
Quality of Management and Leadership	Not assessed

**Authority Commentary**

As in previous Inspections this report reflects a very good service for the children whose permanent care needs are met through adoption and for carers who adopt children. There continues to be acknowledgement and recognition of the commitment of team members, the developments made within the service and to the continuing very good standard of delivery of the service.