



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

SUBJECT: INSPECTION OF MORAY FOSTERING 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 Fostering 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 Fostering.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-

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

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Moray Fostering Service provides a fostering and family placement service for children and young people aged 0 -18 years. The service was previously registered with the Care Commission and transferred its registration to the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011.
- 3.2 The Council recruits, assesses, approves, supports and trains carers to provide a fostering service to a range of children throughout Moray. This includes long-term and short-term care as well as respite care.
- 3.3 The overall intention of foster care is to provide a family based alternative accommodation for children and young people who are not able to live at home.
- 3.4 Inspectors carry out low intensity inspections when they are satisfied that services are providing consistently high standards of care. The previous inspection had been 30 November 2015.

3.5 The evaluation for the Moray Fostering 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 these quality indicators using a six point scale on which very good reflects there are major strengths.

3.6 A brief summary of the inspection report is provided at **APPENDIX 1** to this report. The full inspection report is available on 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/>

3.7 There were no requirements or recommendations.

3.8 There are areas for improvement, consistent with those noted in the inspections of the adoption and supported lodgings services, a number of which correlate to changes in the structure within Placement Services. For the areas of improvement, the Inspectors have asked for a monitoring report at April 2018. While the grades for the services have been maintained, the internal process by which the Inspectors risk rate a service, has resulted in the services in Moray moving from a green position to amber, hence the need to submit a monitoring report. Inspection on the fostering and adoption services are subject of separate reports to this Committee. Inspections on the Moray Supported Lodgings and Adoption 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.

(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 The Inspection report acknowledges a very good service and refers to the commitment of team members, however it makes a number of suggestions for the development of the service within the context of recent change in structure and resultant management plan.

Author of Report: Jennifer Gordon, Corporate Parenting and Commissioning

Background Papers:

Ref:

APPENDIX 1**Moray Fostering Service**

From the previous inspection which concluded on 30 November 2015 there were no recommendations or requirements.

The following reflects a summary of the inspection that concluded 30 August 2017.

What the service does well

- Foster carers informed us that they felt well supported by the staff team to carry out their role.
- They were very well-trained, and told us that they had access to a comprehensive rolling training program, which supported them to meet children's needs.
- Foster carers were supported to meet regularly, where the service offered informal coffee mornings. These events were used to provide training updates or invite speakers.
- Staff were confident about being able to provide the necessary practical and emotional support to foster carers, children and young people.
- Staff told us that they received regular and focused supervision from managers and reported that this was comprehensive and meaningful in supporting the work they were doing.
- The staff team had identified a pattern in placement breakdowns. As a result of this, they were in the process of undertaking a comprehensive review of these and developing training and supports for foster carers. This was an extensive and creative piece of work by the staff team, which showed their commitment to getting their placement matching and supports right for children and young people.
- Monthly senior manager's meetings tracked referrals, placement progress and fully considered any supports that may be required to ensure the progression of assessments and address any blocks that may be encountered.
- Where there were blocks, managers were aware of these and were working to address this.
- The service was at the beginning stages of working with CELSIS (Centre for excellence for looked after children in Scotland) in getting the service PACE (Permanence and care excellence) ready.

What the service could do better

- Whilst we found staff to be motivated, dedicated, knowledgeable and experienced in all areas of fostering it was clear to us that morale was worryingly low across the team. We found this was largely due to the impact of limited and strained resources. Structural changes, constrained budgets and unavoidable staff absence were impacting on and increasing staff caseloads. Staff reported feeling overwhelmed and under significant pressure in their roles.
- We found that the tensions of this were beginning to be reported on by foster carers. In these instances, concerns were addressed immediately.
- The concerns outlined above were recognised and accepted by the manager of the service, who had reviewed the service structure with the team to effectively re-address the balance of workloads. 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. This was in the hope of maintaining the very good service we have found from previously from Moray Council.

- We have asked that the service submit a written evaluation of the impact of these changes on outcomes for children and young people, foster carers and staff to us within six months. This is in recognition of the service's competent self-evaluation and resulting action plan. We found that the service clearly identified the area for development within the service, before the inspection commenced.
- We received mixed feedback from foster carers about the LAAC review systems. When we reported this to the fostering team, they told us that this did not reflect current practice. In the interests of fairness, we asked that they meet with foster carers and explore this area further with them, to ascertain their understanding about what information should be provided and report back to the Care Inspectorate of their findings.
- We also found that minutes from LAAC review meetings could be significantly delayed in reaching foster carers.
- We asked that the service look at how they work with front line services to children and young people, to promote best practice in working alongside foster carers.
- For foster carer's supervisions Inspectors suggested that the service may consider developing the structure or format further to take account of:
 - Emotional risk and need
 - Foster carer training and outcomes identified from the output of this
 - SHANARRI
 - Outcome focussed work
 - Actions identified followed up at next session

Conclusion

The areas identified for improvement did not call into question the overall very good practice being maintained by the staff and the manager in the service, highlighted within this report. A full inspection of the service will be undertaken during the next inspection cycle, to ensure that the implementation of the change management plan has driven improvement across the service.

Enforcements

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

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

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 November 2015

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

Previous

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

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

Authority Commentary

As in previous Inspections this is a report which reflects a very good service for the children whose care needs are met through foster care and for the carers who provide their care. There continues to be acknowledgement and recognition of the commitment of team members, however there are concerns that the staff team are feeling the effects of constraints and staff absence. A change management plan has been in effect and this takes time for due process. The areas suggested for improvement will be reported to the Inspectors in April and to Committee, not later than June 2018.