
Report to **Scrutiny Committee**

Date of Meeting: 12 January 2012

Subject: **Care Commission Inspection Reports regarding
Clackmannanshire Fostering and Adoption Service.**

Report by: **Joint Head of Social Services Clackmannanshire and
Stirling.**

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1. This report has been completed to inform the Scrutiny Committee of the outcome of the most recent Care Inspectorate (SCSWIS) Inspection reports for Fostering and Adoption Services in Clackmannanshire. The Fostering and Adoption Service reports were written following an announced inspection that was completed between the 25th July and the 4th August 2011. (Reports attached as Appendices 1a & b). The Care Inspectorate regulatory protocols operate in such a way that if they have any future improvements to the service that they wish to see implemented that relate to statutory obligations these are framed as requirements. Any recommendations that they make are only suggestions to the service that they feel may help without there being a requirement to implement.
- 1.2. In the inspection of Fostering and Adoption Services the Care Inspectorate chose to inspect on two main areas: The Quality of Care and Support and the Quality of Management and Leadership. Each of these two areas of Quality were further broken down into three statements. The outcomes were as follows:

Foster Care Services:

Quality of Care and Support:	Quality of Management and Leadership:
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Statement 1: Good	Statement 1: Good
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Statement 2: Good	Statement 2: Good
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Statement 3: Good	Statement 3: Good
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Adoption Services:

Quality of Care and Support:

Statement 1: Good

Statement 2: Good

Statement 3: Good

Quality of Management and Leadership:

Statement 1: Good

Statement 2: Good

Statement 3: Good

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that the Committee review the report and comment and challenge as appropriate on:-
- 2.2. To note the content of this report and approve the action plan for the Fostering and Adoption Service which is included in this committee report. The action plan indicates the remedial steps required to comply with any requirements and our intentions in relation to any recommendations offered by the Care Inspectorate.

3.0 Considerations

- 3.1. The Care Inspectorate report made no requirements of this Local Authority with respect to Adoption Services. It did however make 1 requirement with regard to the Fostering Service. The Care Inspectorate report made 1 recommendation related to the Adoption Service and 5 recommendations related to the Fostering Service.
- 3.2. The Fostering requirement was as follows:

Quality Theme 1 Statement 3 (Quality of Care and Support)

"To promote the health and well being of children in line with Council Policy and good practice guidance children under the age of 5 years should not be placed in households where someone smokes". SSI 2011/ 210 Regulation 4(1) (a).

This relates to one occasion when a child was placed for a short period of time with carers where the male carer was a smoker. This was regrettable but the child required a placement and there were no other carers available either internal to the Local Authority or from external providers. The child was moved as quickly as possible to alternative carers. At no time did the male carer smoke within the household during this brief placement. Our efforts to recruit more carers for the Local Authority continue and this incident will not be repeated in the future.

Action

No further children will be placed outwith the Council's Policy and the Good Practice guidance. The current child will have their needs reviewed as soon as possible to address their situation.

Timescale: Within the next six weeks

Responsible Person: Team Manager Fostering and Adoption

3.3 The 5 Fostering recommendations were as follows:

Quality Theme 1 Statement 1 (Quality of Care and Support)

"The Service needs to demonstrate how they have taken action on suggested improvements for people's experiences at Panels". National Care Standard 13.7.

Action

The questionnaires that are collected at Panel re Foster Carers experience of attendance will be collated on annual basis and an action plan developed to respond to this. Planning officer will collate and the first report will be produced in November 2011.

Timescales: November 2011

Responsible Person: Planning Officer

Quality Theme 1 Statement 6

"Information packs should be developed and made available to them when it has been identified that Foster Care is the best option for them". National Care Standard 1.1

Action

Information packs for children will be prepared and provided routinely prior to placement.

Timescale: November 2011

Responsible Person: Service Manager Child Care Services

Quality Theme 1 Statement 6

"Foster Carers should develop profiles about their families that are shared with children they care for". National Care Standard 1.

Action

Foster Carers will be assisted to complete profiles about their families which will be shared routinely with the children they care for.

Timescales: December 2011

Responsible Person: All link social worker will facilitate this with their carers

Quality Theme 4 Statement 3 (Quality of Management and Leadership)

"The system for Agency Decision maker approval of carers operating out with their registration should be further developed to include specific timescales for follow up and review". National Care Standard 11.8.

Action

The system for the Agency Decision Maker to review the use of carers acting outwith their registration criteria will in the future include a timescale for follow up and further review. This will stop the lengthy delays which have occurred and encourage those carers who are outwith registration to be taken back to Panel or have the child moved on.

Timescale: December 2011

Responsible Person: Team Leader, Fostering and Adoption

Quality Theme 4 Statement 4

An annual report detailing the work of the service including feedback given by foster carers, children and young people and other stakeholders should be produced". National Care Standards 13.7.

Action

A full annual report will be produced on a calendar year basis for the service from December 2011 onwards.

Timescale: December 2011

Responsible Person: Service Manager Child Care

- 3.3. The Adoption Service recommendation was as follows:

Quality Theme 1 Statement 3 (Quality of Care and Support)

"The work with other Local Authorities in relation to post adoption contact with birth families should continue to be progressed".

This recommendation relates to the work ongoing between Stirling, Falkirk and Clacks with regard to a shared service agenda for Fostering and Adoption. Discussions continue.

Action

The integration of services between Clackmannanshire and Stirling will identify this role within the function of the new integrated Team for Fostering and Adoption.

Timescale: April 2012

Responsible Person: Service Manager Fostering and Adoption

- 3.4 An action plan has been prepared for the Care Inspectorate to implement the requirement and the recommendations in advance of any future inspection activity.

- 3.5 The requirement and recommendations are based on the Inspectors observation of the service during the Inspection process, including reviewing case files, meeting carers, meeting young people in placement and attending important meetings of a strategic and operational nature including the foster care consultative committee, reviews of carers and the children they care for.
- 3.6 The report also gives feedback on the service strengths that they have observed during the Inspection. A selection of these from the full report are:
- "There is very good evidence that that the agency actively seeks the views of people using the service."*
- "Foster carers feel confident that their views are valued by staff at all levels in the organisation."*
- "Supervising social workers receive very good support from managers. As a result they are growing in confidence, knowledge and skills and becoming more effective in their roles."*
- " A participation strategy has been developed outlining ways in which adoptive parents can be involved in the service."*
- "Good information is recorded by social workers outlining why adoption or permanency is in the child's best interests. They are pro-active in seeking information and keeping birth parents involved and up to date about the progress being made for their child."*
- "Foster Carers have had access to a variety of training opportunities. They are able to identify any training needs and are satisfied that staff support them in this"*
- 3.7 It is important to appreciate the journey the Service has been on with respect to Fostering and Adoption services. As you can see from Reports themselves the service has improved from inspection to inspection. In 2008 the service was found weak , in 2009 it was found to be good or adequate and for the last 2 years the overall quality indicators are all good. This is despite there being localised absence issues in the Fostering and Adoption Team.
- 3.8 The next 12 months will be a time of change for the service with staff changes imminent including the need to look at new first line management for the Team itself. Ongoing work is taking place with Falkirk and Stirling Council's to establish whether there are efficiencies both organisational and financial in a shared Adoption and Fostering service across central Scotland. Further work is required particularly in relation to the harmonisation of systems, fees, administration and infrastructure but there appears to be a willingness to work together between the Councils.
- 3.9 There have been no further announced or unannounced inspections at Woodside Residential Unit for young people in Clackmannan since the last report to Scrutiny Committee in 2010. The unit still has its Excellent ratings in all aspects of its operation and is thriving. There have been several changes of young person in the last year as 3 young people have moved on to supported accommodation in the community but they all still keeping strong ties to the unit and are supported by staff from the unit in their new homes.

4.0 Sustainability Implications

- 4.1. There is no doubt that the imminent financial challenges faced by this Council may have an impact on the journey of this service towards continuous improvement. Therefore the discussions between the three Local Authorities take on more immediate importance by being a possible solution to the need to seek to be more effective within a climate of less financial resources.

5.0 Resource Implications

5.1. *Financial Details*

- 5.2. The full financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. This includes a reference to full life cycle costs where appropriate.

Yes ☒

More detailed information will be forthcoming in the near future re the possible integration across the 3 Local Authorities.

- 5.3. Finance have been consulted and have agreed the financial implications as set out in the report.

Yes ☒

5.4. *Staffing*

6.0 Exempt Reports

- 6.1. Is this report exempt? Yes ☐ (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No ☒

7.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

- (1) **Our Priorities 2008 - 2011** (Please double click on the check box ☒)

The area has a positive image and attracts people and businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our communities are more cohesive and inclusive	X
People are better skilled, trained and ready for learning and employment	X
Our communities are safer	X
Vulnerable people and families are supported	X
Substance misuse and its effects are reduced	X
Health is improving and health inequalities are reducing	X
The environment is protected and enhanced for all	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Council is effective, efficient and recognised for excellence	X

(2) Council Policies (Please detail)

8.0 Equalities Impact

8.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?

Yes ☐ No ☒

9.0 Legality

9.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes ☒

10.0 Appendices

10.1 Please list any appendices attached to this report. If there are no appendices, please state "none".

Appendix1(a) - Adoption Service Inspection report

Appendix1(b) - Fostering Service Inspection report

11.0 Background Papers

11.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)

Yes ☐ (please list the documents below) No ☒

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Approved by

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