

Report

17

Report to:	Social Work Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	7 February 2007
Report by:	Executive Director (Social Work Resources)

Subject:	Inspection of Adoption and Fostering Services by the Care Commission
----------	---

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ Inform of the findings of the Care Commission's inspection of Adoption and Fostering Services

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the Care Commission's inspection reports on Adoption and Fostering Services and corresponding Action Plans be noted.

3. Background

3.1. From April 2002, the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care [known as the Care Commission] have been registering and inspecting a range of services. All of these, whether administered by local authorities, health boards, private providers or voluntary bodies are inspected and reported on within the same legal framework.

3.2. The Care Commission assess the Fostering and Adoption Services against the regulations set out under the Regulation of Care [Scotland] Act 2001 and against a set of National Standards.

3.3. Inspection of Adoption and Fostering Services is only now being rolled out across Scotland since the beginning of 2006.

4. The Inspection Process

4.1. The inspection involved significant pre-inspection work, with the submission of a Pre-inspection Return and Self Evaluation Form and questionnaires sent out to 20% of the key stakeholders.

4.2. In addition to the questionnaires, the Care Commission Officers also:

- interviewed 23 foster carers
- analysed 20% of foster carer case files
- interviewed staff, including administrative and support staff
- observed an Adoption and Fostering Panel and conducted related interviews
- observed a preparatory/training session with carers, then met with the participants for feedback on their assessment process.

- 4.3. At the end of the inspection, there are three processes. Firstly, verbal feedback, followed by a draft report and then the final report. The final report highlights strengths and areas for development and any requirements or recommendations.
- 4.4. The Action Plan shows details of the action, person responsible and timescales in terms of each requirement and recommendation.

5. Summary of the findings of the inspection of the Council's Adoption Service

- 5.1. There were no Requirements and thirteen Recommendations
- 5.2. Overall, this is a positive report which reflects the continuous development and improvement of services for children who benefit from adoption.
- 5.3. Of the thirteen recommendations, four formed part of a previous and separate Care Commission audit in relation to staff recruitment.
- 5.4. The remaining nine recommendations relate to issues of practice, systems and guidance and show areas which can be further developed, rather than any major concerns, most of which had already been identified and work is well underway to address these within the set deadlines.

6. Summary of the findings of the inspection of the Council's Fostering Service

- 6.1. There are three separate areas registered within the fostering service:
- Mainstream fostering services based at Brandon Gate, Hamilton. This team works with the majority of foster carers through recruitment, assessment, preparation, training and support.
 - Shared Carers service based at Brandon Gate, Hamilton. This team works with children who have a disability and where shared carers provide short and regular care for children, eg one weekend a month to provide some shared care.
 - Respite community based fostering service based at Rutherglen Local Office. This service provides very short respite for a small number of children and young people who at all other times live with their family.
- 6.2. Core fostering services were reported as very positive, with a need for the 3 separate teams to be functioning more consistently. Planning and monitoring systems have already been put in place to address this.
- 6.3. The report again reflects the continuous development and enhancement of the fostering service which has involved significant improvements in recruitment, expansion, payments, training and increased accountability, together with major funding.
- 6.4. The recommendations relate to issues of practice, systems and guidance and show areas which can be further developed, rather than any major concerns.
- 6.5. The findings for both reports evidence the commitment and efforts towards continuous improvement in terms of the service provided and the outcomes for children and young people. The Action Plan shows the structured approach to building on this further.

7. Employee Implications

- 7.1. None

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1. None

9. Other Implications

9.1. None

10. Consultation

- 10.1. A pre-inspection meeting took place between Social Work Resources and the Care Commission, which included operational, management and performance management personnel to ensure clarity of the inspection process.
- 10.2. Questionnaires were sent out to 20% of key stakeholders, to which there was a very high response and helped to inform the inspection process.
- 10.3. Regular consultation meetings are held with foster carers to provide support and help further develop services for looked after children and young people.
- 10.4. Representatives from Children's Rights and Who Cares? Scotland consult with children and young people in foster care through direct contact, a newsletter and a child-friendly summary of the report and action plan will be made available, with an opportunity for direct discussion.

Harry Stevenson
Executive Director (Social Work Resources)

15 December 2006

Link(s) to Council Objectives

- ◆ Supporting Our Communities

Previous References

None

List of Background Papers

- Action Plans submitted to Care Commission

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Liz Lafferty, Child Care Services Manager

Ext: 3943 (Tel: 01698 453943)

E-mail: liz.lafferty@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Ref: C&Fj0702 (version 6)