

---

**To: Education and Children Policy Board**

**On: 21 January 2016**

---

**Report by: Director of Children's Services**

---

**Heading: Annual Report of the Adoption and Fostering Panel 2014/15**

---

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1. This report refers to the eighth annual report of Renfrewshire's Fostering and Adoption Panel
  - 1.2. The Annual report sets out the work undertaken by the Panel in the year 2014/2015 and is set in the context of the broader issues pertaining to Looked After and Accommodated Children.
  - 1.3. The report also makes reference to the continuing progress being made with the increased recruitment year on year of Renfrewshire's own foster carers. During the year an additional 5 foster carer households were approved.
  - 1.4. The report also considers the future work of the panel, the current work with the Scottish Government on improving timescales for adoptive placements and the outcome of the inspection of the Fostering and Adoption Service by the Care Inspectorate.
  - 1.5. The annual report provides an update on the development of the Renfrewshire Fostering Service and details the new fostering training plan for both new and experienced carers.
- 

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. The Education and Children Policy Board is asked to note the contents of the Fostering and Adoption Annual Report 2014/15
-

### **3. Background**

- 3.1. The Regulations supporting the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 require Social Work in its role as a Fostering and Adoption agency to operate a Fostering Panel and an Adoption Panel. These panels have the responsibility for putting forward recommendations to the agency decision maker (currently the Head of Child Care and Criminal Justice Services) regarding the suitability of people to adopt or foster children. Furthermore, the Adoption Panel considers and approves plans for children to be adopted or for the Council to apply for Parental Responsibilities Orders. The Panel also considers and approves the matching of a particular child with a particular family where the plan is for the child to live there permanently.
- 3.2. Renfrewshire operates a Fostering and Adoption Panel; each with separate constitutions. The panels will often meet at the same time however each meeting separates out the Fostering panel business from the Adoption panel business to ensure that the appropriate regulations are met regarding a quorum, and for the attendance of the legal and medical adviser
- 3.3. There are currently 22 panel members comprising elected members, social work and education staff, a legal adviser, a medical adviser, carers and an independent member from the Adoption and Fostering Alliance Scotland. The panel is chaired by the Principal Officer for Accommodated Children from Childrens Service and meets at twice monthly. The vice chair of the panel is an independent representative from the Adoption and Fostering Alliance Scotland which came into being with the British Association of Adoption and Fostering ended in the summer of 2015. . There are typically 6 to 8 members sitting on the panel at each meeting. The combined panels met 23 times and considered 74 agenda items over the course of the year
- 3.4. The panel has a unique overview of the work being undertaken to assess and approve foster carers and adopters alongside the work being undertaken by social workers to progress plans for children who cannot be cared for within their own family. The annual report has been produced as a means of sharing this work with a wider audience and to assist in the process of service planning.
- 3.5. Between 1/10/14 and 30/9/15 10 households were invited to attend preparation groups and 7 households have gone on to assessment. Renfrewshire had 88 active households of foster carers at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015 compared with 86 at the same time last year. In the period 1/10/14 and 30/9/15, an additional 5 households were registered however 3 foster carer households were also deregistered.
- 3.6. The report notes the ongoing need to recruit foster carers and adopters in light of the fact that numbers of children being accommodated and in need of permanent care continues to rise. Good progress has been made with this as can be noted from the increased number of agenda items appearing at Pane.
- 3.7. In the period 1/10/14 and 30/9/15 a total of 6 Renfrewshire households were approved as adopters at the Renfrewshire panel. A further 4 short term foster carers were approved as permanent carers.

- 3.8. The Fostering and Adoption services are subject to regulation and were inspected by the Care Inspectorate for the in August 2105. The Care Inspectorate reports were positive with gradings of 5 (very good) being applied to all domains inspected.
- 3.9. The Adoption Service has been working in partnership with the Scottish Governments Permanence and Care Excellence programme (PaCE) which has resulted in a significant decrease in the time taken to move young children on to adoptive placements. The success of this programme has meant that it is now being rolled out on a national basis.
- 3.10. The Children and Young People Act (Scotland) 2014 increases the responsibility/ duty of Local Authorities to provide Throughcare and Aftercare up to the age of 26. The implications of this as yet are unclear but in all likelihood young people will remain in foster care and supported care longer. The service continues to convert foster carers into supported carers wherever this is appropriate.

---

### **Implications of this report**

1. **Financial Implications**  
None.
2. **HR and Organisational Development Implications**  
None.
3. **Community Plan/Council Plan Implications**  
  

Children and Young People	- The work of the adoption and fostering Service means our most vulnerable children and young people who require to be looked after away from home or permanent care are protected and safe
---------------------------	---
4. **Legal Implications**  
None.
5. **Property/Assets Implications**  
None.
6. **Information Technology Implications**  
None.
7. **Equality and Human Rights Implications**  
 The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because for example it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website. (Report author to arrange this).

- 8.     **Health and Safety Implications**  
None.
  - 9.     **Procurement Implications**  
None.
  - 10.    **Risk Implications**  
None.
  - 11.    **Privacy Impact**  
None.
- 

### **List of Background Papers**

None.

---

**Children's Services**  
*DH*  
11 January 2016

**Author:** Dorothy Hawthorn, Head of Service Childcare and Criminal Justice, 618 6827



**THE FOSTERING PANEL**  
**AND**  
**THE ADOPTION PANEL**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2014/2015**



## **Foreword**

## **Introduction**

## **Context**

- Accommodated Children
- Carers Considered by the Fostering and Adoption Panels

## **Overall Service Developments**

- Panel membership
- Commitment to permanency planning
- Training
- Consultation with Service Users

## **Report on the Fostering Service**

- New Developments 2014 -2015
- Inspection
- Recruitment activity
- Preparation Groups
- New foster carers and carers deregistration
- Foster carers reviews
- Foster carers training
- Foster carers support group
- Carers consultation group
- Foster carers recognition day
- Development of fostering service -2015

## **Report on the Supported Carers Service**

- Supported carers
- Inspection
- Development of the supported carers service - 2015

## **Report on the Adoption Service**

- Inspection
- Recruitment of adoptive parents
- Adopters
- Family finding
- Scotland's Adoption Register
- Adoption Support Groups
- Development of adoption service - 2015



## Foreword

Welcome to the annual report of The Fostering Panel and The Adoption Panel. This report has been compiled by the Chair of the Panels and takes both a retrospective look at the previous year as well as looking to the future.

As at the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015 Renfrewshire Council had 689 'Looked After' Children. Of these 218 were looked after at home, 178 were in Kinship Care arrangements. 240 are in foster care or pre-adoptive placements and 53 are in residential care placements.

A significant number of these children will be unable to return home to live with birth parents or relatives. The work of the Fostering and Adoption service is vital in ensuring that children are placed appropriately and safely and that children who require permanent placements out with their families are moved to an appropriate household at the earliest opportunity.

The Panel provides an important quality assurance role in ensuring that the work undertaken to assess children's long term care needs and the assessment of their potential carers is carried out to the highest standards. Their role is to make recommendations to the agency decision maker who ultimately approves children's permanence plans or confirms that a household can adopt or become foster carers.

In recent years the fostering service has made great progress in recruiting foster carers and we have successfully shifted the balance of placements from external to internal. On 30.9.15 there were 133 children with Renfrewshire foster carers and 92 children in external fostering agency placements. These figures demonstrate the continuing upward trend of placing children with Renfrewshire foster carers.

We have also forged strong collaborative working arrangements with the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children (CELCIS), jointly delivering training to social work staff and agreeing to be part of the Permanence and Care Excellence pilot in 2014. This is now being rolled out across our service which will ensure a whole systems approach to permanence for children who require this.

Peter Macleod  
Director of Children's Services



## Introduction

This is the annual report of Renfrewshire Council's Fostering Panel and the Adoption Panel.

The purpose of the Panel is to consider applicants who wish to be foster carers, adopters or supported carers and to consider individual children's needs for alternative permanent carers (i.e. where the care plan for the child is that they do not return home to their birth family), this includes considering the most appropriate legal action to secure this. The Panel also consider the matching of a child with specific foster carers or adoptive carers to ensure that these are of a consistently high standard. The Panel will make a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker.

With increasing numbers of children unable to return to their birth families activity within the fostering and adoption team continues to be high and the recruitment of foster carers and adopters continues to be a prime objective. The number of children unable to return home to live with birth families continues to increase and this is reflected in the amount of permanence planning work within the social work fieldwork teams. For many of the children involved in the permanency planning process their journey will have started with child protection procedures which resulted in them becoming accommodated.

The fostering service and the adoption service continue to be inspected by the regulatory body, the Care Inspectorate. Their most recent Inspection took place in August 2015 where all aspects of service delivery in both the Fostering and Adoption Service were assessed as Grade 5 which is very good across all domains inspected.

Included in the annual report are some of the business aspects of the panel and the types of cases considered by the Panel. It is intended that by producing an Annual report the work of the Fostering Panel and the Adoption Panel will be transparent and that this accountability will lead to improved services.

## Context

The work of the Fostering Panel and the Adoption Panel needs to be viewed in the context of the numbers of Looked After and Accommodated children.

## Accommodated and Looked After Children/Young People

As of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015, Renfrewshire Council had 689 Looked After Children/Young People.

Independent Sector-Children - Foster Care	92
Local Authority-Children - Foster Care	133
Local Authority-Children - Houses	31
Independent Sector-Children - Residential Schools	9
Independent Sector-Children - Residential Special Needs	6
Pre-adoption	15
Independent Sector-Children - Secure School	3
Independent Sector-Children - Residential Unit	4
Children cared for by related carers	120
Children looked after by friends/relatives	58
Children looked after at home	218
<b>Total</b>	<b>689</b>

## Cases Considered by the Fostering Panel and the Adoption Panel

Below is a breakdown of the items considered by the Panels between 1.10.14 – 30.9.15

<b>Business Item</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Child adoption plans & links	21	1 sibling group of 2 19 individual children
Approval of Renfrewshire adopters (households)	6	5 couples – domestic adopters 1 fostering family – adoption of child in their care
Review of Registration (adoption)	1	Overseas adopters
Permanent fostering plans - links and legal route		
Links	9	The 8 children/young people were linked through the Fostering and Adoption Panel to their current foster carers.  Of the 9 children/young people were the plan for permanent fostering was approved there was 1 sibling group of 2
Legal routes	9	
Approval of Renfrewshire foster carers (households)	5	
Approval of Renfrewshire Short-term foster carers to permanent foster carers	4	
Deregistration of foster carer	3	
Approval of supported carers (households)	8	
Initial review of foster carer after their 1 <sup>st</sup> year	6	
Approval of Renfrewshire respite foster carers to short term foster carer	1	
Investigations taken to Panel	3	1 resulted in de - registration 1 had registration reduced 1 continued fostering

## **Overall Service Developments**

### **Panel Membership**

We are fortunate to have had consistent and committed panel membership over the past year. Panel membership continues to reflect a good range of experience and expertise, from social work, education and health. The Panel continues to be well supported by adopter and foster carer members and elected members. The Adoption and Fostering Alliance Scotland also continue to provide an independent panel member. This new resource offers vital support, training and consultancy to practitioners following the closure of BAAF. A list of panel members can be found at the end of this report (appendix 1)

We are actively recruiting new Panel Members due to the increase in Panel business and to allow us to spread the work load over a larger amount of Panel members. In 2015 we recruited three new panel members.

In the past year training for Panel members has included an input from CELCIS to inform Panel Members of the work Renfrewshire Council has been involved in the PACE (Permanence and Care Excellence) programme.

Our medical advisers continue to offer a valuable service and support to the panel in respect of provision of information in relation to the children and adults being presented to panel.

We also have ongoing representation from Renfrewshire Councils Legal Service who provides written legal advice to the Panel in relation to adoption and permanence work, as well as attending the Panel to provide legal advice as required.

### **Commitment to permanence planning**

Between 1.10.14 and 30.9.15 Renfrewshire has progressed adoption and permanence plans for 30 children. Renfrewshire Council recognises the importance in progressing plans for children within appropriate time scales. There are a number of initiatives being implemented by senior management to support and enable social work staff involved in permanence work to undertake both the direct work with the child and family and the necessary reports. These initiatives include training for social workers and carers on issues specifically relevant to permanence and also working closely with fieldwork staff with regards to the needs of the child and planning for adoption or permanency.

The FACT (Family Assessment and Contact Team) assist with intensive parenting assessments for families who have already experienced permanence with previous children. These assessments are completed within appropriate time scales and, if permanence in care is the agreed plan for the child, Form E's are completed by the team.

Making the decision to place a child permanently out with their birth family involves a high level of assessment and scrutiny. Throughout the process checks and balances are in place to ensure the best possible outcome for the child. Permanence planning work is complex, however it is also highly rewarding when children find new families to care for them for life.

The timeframe for adoption is crucial to a child's attachment security, development and longer term stability. Recent national statistics show that the average time (for all ages) between a child becoming looked after and the decision to pursue a permanent placement is 11 months. It then takes an average of 10 months (again all ages) before a child is matched and placed with an adoptive family. Therefore there is an average period of 21 months between the child

initially being placed into Local Authority Care to being then placed with their adoptive family. The work undertaken by Renfrewshire Council with the Scottish Government and Celcis (PaCE) initiative has identified several work streams and new methodology ideas as a commitment to reducing these. The benefits of this have been evidenced at the Fostering and Adoption Panel over the year 2014 – 2015 where plans for adoption are being approved for many children under 2 years old.

## **Training**

The new post of training and development officer for the Fostering and Adoption Service has proved to be very beneficial resulting in a comprehensive training programme being developed for our foster carers. This includes a rolling training programme for newly approved foster carers as well as more specialised training for experienced trainers which is directed at developing foster carers skills and appropriate to their age range of approval (appendix 2).

To compliment this, internal joint training has taken place with foster carers and social workers covering a range of topics relevant to accommodated children who are in need of permanent placements. This includes child protection, children affected by parental substance misuse, attachment and trauma, safer caring, therapy and permanence.

Social workers, foster carers and adopters also have the opportunity to attend external training courses. The Fostering Network has provided training to new social workers within the Fostering and Adoption Team including such training as Skills to Foster and the Role of the Supervising Social Worker. Foster carers, adopters and supervising social workers have also attended external conferences such as the role of men in Fostering

## **FOSTERING SERVICE**

As of the 30.9.15 we had 86 fostering households, this included permanent foster carers, short term foster carers and respite foster carers.

## **New developments 2014 -2015**

- Rolled out the Welcome Pack for children/young people being accommodated with a Renfrewshire Council Foster Carers. The pack consists of an information leaflet about fostering, appropriate to the child/young people age and developmental stage, information about Who Cares? And how to contact Who Cares?
- Fully implemented the foster carer newsletter
- Continuing development of the foster carers training programme.
- Created a young person in foster care forum with Who Cares? Scotland.
- Appointed a graduate intern with the brief of developing a campaign to recruit foster carers and adopters
- Review of the foster carer review paper work for the child's social workers and the children/young people in foster care to make it more appropriate and user friendly.

## **Inspection**

The Fostering service was inspected by the Care Inspectorate in August 2015. The areas that were inspected were – Quality of Care and Support; Quality of Staffing; Quality of Management and Leadership. The Fostering service was awarded grade 5 (very good) for each of these areas.

### **Recruitment activity 1.10.14 – 30.9.15**

In January 2015 we recruited a Graduate Intern to develop a campaign for recruiting foster and adoptive carers. This campaign had a particular emphasis on recruiting foster carers for older children, permanent carers and carers able to care for children with disabilities. The campaign used the new resources and a variety of media.

We have introduced an electronic facility for initial enquiries via e mail which is also responded to by our Business Support team.

All enquiries are followed up within 10 working days and those still interested after reading the pack will have an initial home visit from the team. An enquiry initial visit pro forma will also be completed at this time and the information will also be entered on the Social Work Information System.

Discussion between the visiting social worker and the senior social worker takes places to consider whether the enquirers should be invited to preparation groups. Enquirers would then be advised of the date for next preparation group.

Where there are health issues, the enquirer has a criminal conviction or has had previous involvement with social work an early medical or PVG check may be requested. Advice is sought from the Renfrewshire Fostering Panel medical adviser in relation to health issues and where enquirers have disclosed criminal convictions a report is submitted to the Head of Childcare and Criminal Justice before deciding to take the enquiry further. In some cases the enquirer may be asked to take a further period of time to consider their enquiry.

### **Preparation groups**

Between 1.10.14 – 30.9.15 we held 2 preparation groups for fostering. 10 households attended and this resulted in 5 fostering assessments being allocated.

Preparation groups run for six sessions using the Fostering Network 'Skills to Foster' materials, the material used for the preparation groups is currently being reviewed in order to make use of up to date research and our own recently developed training materials. Our social workers team are skilled at leading these groups and there is also input by the senior social workers for the last session. Two workers lead all six sessions thus providing continuity for the participants.

The groups are the start of the assessment process and an opportunity to have more in depth information and discussion about the implications of fostering; as such it is important that all enquirers attend. Experienced foster carers come along to talk to the group about their experiences.

The preparation group covers a range of topics including managing challenging behaviour, attachment issues, safer care and working with birth parents. Participants are asked to give written feedback on each of the sessions and on any issues that the discussions may have

raised for them. At the end of the six week period the workers leading the group will also complete written reports on each of the participants and their contributions over the previous weeks. They will also highlight areas of concern or where further consideration may be necessary regarding the participants suitability to proceed to the formal assessment stage.

Following the group a decision is taken as to who will be invited to make an application to be assessed as a foster carer. The participants will be visited at home and given feedback on whether or not they are invited to make an application. Some reasons for withdrawal or counselling out during the assessment process include accommodation problems, health issues and family crisis.

Within this period of time we have been assessing 2 short term fostering households for permanent fostering for 3 young people.

### **New foster carers and carer de-registrations**

In the period 1.10.14 – 30.9.15 an additional 5 short term foster carer households were registered. 4 short term fostering households were approved as permanent fostering households for a child in their care. 1 short term fostering household were approved as adopters for a specific child in their care.

3 households were deregistered during the period of the report.

Over the last few years a steady increase in the number of Renfrewshire fostering households has allowed us to be less dependent on the Independent and Voluntary foster care sector. On 30.9.15 there were 133 children/young people with Renfrewshire foster carers and 92 children/young people in external fostering agency placements. These figures demonstrate the continuing upward trend of placing children with Renfrewshire Council foster carers.

Social Workers from the fostering team visit carers on a regular basis to carry out supervision as well as performing a range of duties including ensuring health and safety checks are carried out annually. Safer caring policies are in place for each fostering household which ensure a minimum of at least two unannounced visits are out annually. Supervising Social Workers will also attending reviews, meetings and Children's Hearings with the carers. Joint visits by the child's social worker and the social worker from the fostering and adoption team takes places when a new placement is established and routinely thereafter.

### **Foster carer reviews**

New Foster carers are reviewed by the Fostering Panel at the end of their first year as foster carers. Between 1.10.14 and 30.9.15 the Fostering and Adoption Panel reviewed 5 foster carers after their first year. This is an opportunity for carers to talk about their experience and whether their expectations of the fostering task had been met. The majority of new foster carers expressed satisfaction with their first year with most remaining enthusiastic and committed. They have found the support provided by their social worker to be beneficial as well as finding the training offered informative and beneficial to the fostering task.

Experienced foster carers are also reviewed on an annual basis, by the field work managers. The foster carers provide written as well as verbal contribution to the review process, as well as written reports by their birth children. Reports by their supervising social worker, child's social worker and child are also completed for the review process.

We are currently considering introducing an additional review of our carers at the three year stage of their fostering career.

## **Foster carer training**

As part of foster carers ongoing development and training an extensive training programme is offered throughout the year for both new and experienced carers. As previously stated an induction training programme is now in place (appendix 2). Training for more experienced foster carers has included Child Protection Training, Theraplay, Trauma and Attachment etc. Foster carers are now being directed to training related to their skills and development; they are also being encouraged to make use of a training record sheet.

The social work training section continue to provide the opportunity and support for foster carers to complete an SVQ level 3 in Children's Care Learning and Development.

## **Carers Support Groups**

The carers support group has been running for over two years. The group meets monthly and through the foster carers newsletter all foster carers are encouraged to attend. Any issues are fed back to the foster carers social worker and the support group is part of the agenda for the Carers Consultation Group.

## **Consultations**

The service consults regularly with foster carers and adopters on a range of issues. All Foster Carers are invited to attend a Carers Consultation Meeting which now meets every four months. Recent discussion included issues in relation to ongoing training for carers; carers support group, carers' newsletter, foster carers vacancies, proposed changes to respite and developments in the child care services. This also provides an opportunity for foster carers to discuss any issue that has arisen for them or other carers.

Our foster carers continue to organise a monthly support group. This is an informal support group where foster carers can drop in as they wish; issues raised within the group are fed back to the fostering team via the carers supervising social worker or the foster carers consultation group

The Principal Officer invites foster carers to meet with her twice a year. Again this is a forum for foster carers to raises issues and for the Principal Officer to consult with foster carers.

Feedback from those attending the Adoption and Fostering Panel is also sought via the use of questionnaires. These are regularly reviewed by the Panel Advisor and Panel Chair.

Panel members are invited to attend annual appraisal meetings with the panel chair and panel advisor. Feedback from panel members is gathered from this meeting and ideas generated are incorporated into the business meeting agenda for consideration.

The fostering service has developed a young person's forum for children residing in foster care. They meet 6 weekly and are currently devising a young person's newsletter. This group is currently supported by Who Cares? Scotland who attend the group along with staff from the fostering and adoption service.

A leaving foster care questionnaire has been developed for children over 6 years or more who are either leaving foster care or moving on to another foster placement. The social workers for the children are responsible for gathering this information.

Prospective adopters and others who attend the Fostering and Adoption panel are given questionnaires at the end of each panel. These are sent to the Panel Advisor who collates this feedback.

The new post of Compliance and Development Officer is now involved in panel member training and development. Regular training events are currently being planned for 2016 which will include formal panel member induction

### **Children's Group (We Care Too)**

We have developed a group for foster carers birth children who meet four times each year in response to suggestions made by our foster carers. This is an activity based group where young people can meet up with other young people whose family foster to discuss what this means for them. The group is run by our fostering staff team. The group held a competition to name their group with the name chosen being 'We Care Too'.

### **Staff Development Day**

The annual staff development day to review the Service Development Plan will take place in February 2016.

### **Future Developments**

Over the next year we plan to:

- Develop a newsletter for locality teams about the work of the service
- Develop our young people in foster care forum who currently meet six weekly and support them in launching their newsletter
- Separate the fostering and adoption business of the panel to make this more efficient for panel members
- Offer weekend training to foster carers unable to attend weekly training events due to work commitments to ensure all carer's training needs are supported.
- Recruit more carers specifically for older children.
- Increase our recruitment of permanent foster carers.

### **SUPPORTED CARERS**

The Supported Carers service moved from the Throughcare service to be part of the Fostering and Adoption Service at the end of 2013.

Within the period 1.10.14 to 30.9.15 the Fostering and Adoption Panel has approved 8 fostering households as supported carers. 6 of whom were foster carers from independent agencies and 1 was a foster carer for Renfrewshire Council. We now have 17 supported carers, 10 of whom are Renfrewshire Council supported carers, 2 supported carers placements provided by other local authorities and 1 supported carer provided by an independent fostering agency.

## **Inspection**

The Supported Carers service was inspected by the Care Inspectorate in March 2014. The areas that were inspected were – Quality of Care and Support; Quality of Staffing; Quality of Management and Leadership. The Supported Carers service was awarded 4's (good) for each of these areas. The inspector recognised that, at this time, this was a new service to the Fostering and Adoption Team and still in the transition stage of development.

## **Development of the supported carers service -2015**

Over the next year we plan to:

- Develop a support group for supported carers
- Develop a training plan for support carers

## **Adoption and Permanence Service**

### **Recruitment of Adoptive Parents and Permanent Carers**

There continues to be a need for both adoptive carers and permanent foster carers for children of all ages who meet our adoption criteria (appendix 3). Nationally there is recognition that more carers are also required for sibling groups and older children.

From 1.10.14 to 30.9.15 there have been two adoption preparation groups one of which was run jointly with Inverclyde Council. A total of fourteen participants attended (13 couples and 1 single person).

Renfrewshire Council's adoption service has made good use of the Scottish Adoption Register and resulted in positive matches for our children.

We have participated in several Adoption Exchange days between 1.10.14 to 30.9.15 and have presented 11 children who are seen as hard to place for a variety of reasons. This has proven to be very successful as we have linked 6 children with adoptive families with 4 further links having been identified.

### **Adopters**

In the period between 1.10.14 to 30.9.15 seven households were recommended for approval as adopters. Also within this period four short term foster carers were approved adoptive carers for the children/young people in their care.

### **Family Finding**

During the period 1.10.14 – 30.9.15 twenty one children (1 sibling group of 2 and 19 solo children) were presented to the Adoption Panel for consideration of adoption plans and links. In all cases the Agency Decision Maker accepted the panel's recommendations to approve the plans and links.

## **Scotland's Adoption Register**

Scotland's Adoption Register is a project funded by the Scottish Government and is currently operated by register staff located in St Andrew's Adoption Agency and became operational in 2011. The Register is a computer database that collects and stores data on both children who have a plan for adoption and approved adopters throughout Scotland. The purpose of the register gathering this information is to improve the chances of finding families for children. Our Adoption Service routinely uses the register for family finding.

Renfrewshire Council work closely with Inverclyde Council and East Renfrewshire Council and meetings are held bi-monthly to look at working together in sharing resources such as planning adoption preparation groups together, linking children with each other's adopters and recruitment.

## **Adoption Support Group**

The adoption support group continues to meet four times a year. The attendance at the group varies depending on the topic being presented and particular issues that may be affecting adoptive placements. In response to feedback received from adopters these meetings now take place at weekends to maximise attendance.

For the majority of people who attend the group the main benefits are meeting other people in similar situations and hearing about strategies and tips for dealing with difficult situations. The group has also been the starting point for the development of friendships and informal supports.

## **Development of the adoption service – 2015 -2016**

Over the next year we intend to strengthen our adoption service by looking at;

- Recruitment of new adopters
- Recruitment of new Fostering and Adoption Panel Members
- Strengthen our Adoption Support by recruiting a social worker to work solely in the adoption service.
- Continue to develop work undertaken with PaCE and CELCIS to reduce length of time and ages of children whose permanence plans are presented to the Fostering and Adoption Panel
- Continued development work with our linking process using the Adoption register
- Support Adoption Exchange days and Adoption Activity Days.
- Development of post adoption support plans by offering direct support to families within one year of the child being placed by introducing an annual contact with families' post adoption.
- Continue to offer further adoption support via SAS. (Scotland Adoption Support – Barnados)

- Create a formal link and make use of Scotland's Birthlink Service to support family origin searches for children and families who have experienced adoption with Renfrewshire.

## **Conclusion**

This report has highlighted the work of the Fostering, Adoption and Supported Carers Services and the work of the Fostering panel and the Adoption panel. It is evident from the activity of the Fostering and Adoption Panels that the number of children unable to return to live with their birth families remains high within Renfrewshire.

The Fostering Service and Adoption Service been inspected by the Care Inspectorate and again received positive reports. All three services continue to use self assessment methods to identify areas for improvement and development of the services. Recommendations made by the Care Inspectorate are also acted on. Renfrewshire continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to children who require alternative families because they are unable to live with their birth families.

This report forms part of the quality control system that monitors the practice of the Panel and the quality of the work being undertaken on behalf of Renfrewshire's most vulnerable children.

As Chair of the Adoption and Fostering Panel I would like to take this opportunity to thank Panel members for their hard work and commitment to Renfrewshire's most vulnerable children. Also our Foster Carers dedication to children means that we can provide the best outcomes to them both now and in the future. We look forward to the coming year and to continuing our work with all agencies to improve the outcomes and secure the future of Renfrewshire children who require both temporary and permanent care.

Joyce Gartshore

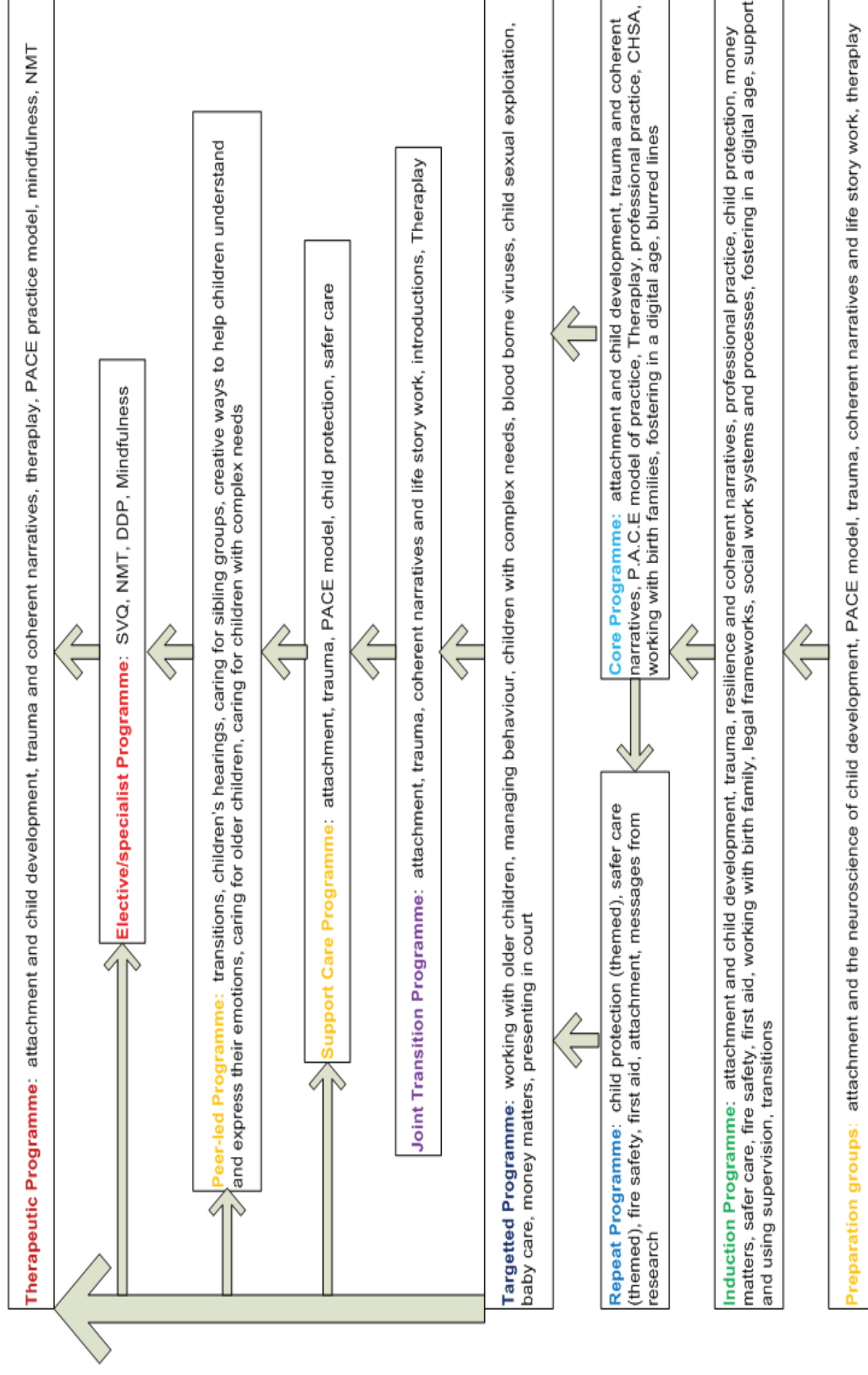
Chairperson of the Adoption Panel and the Fostering Panel

## Adoption &amp; Fostering Panel Members (appendix 1)

<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>
Joyce Gartshore (Chair)	Principal Officer	<a href="mailto:joyce.gartshore@renfrewshire.gsx.gov.uk">joyce.gartshore@renfrewshire.gsx.gov.uk</a>	Abbey House, 8 Seedhill Road, Paisley, PA1 1JT	0300 300 1199
Ian Beattie (Chair)	Adult Services Manager Social Work	<a href="mailto:ian.beattie@renfrewshire.gsx.gov.uk">ian.beattie@renfrewshire.gsx.gov.uk</a>	Abbey House, 8 Seedhill Road, Paisley, PA1 1JT	0300 300 1199
Ravinder Kaur (Depute Chair)	Director of BAAF	<a href="mailto:ravinder.kaur@baaf.org.uk">ravinder.kaur@baaf.org.uk</a>	Top Floor, 113 Rose Street, Edinburgh, EH2 3DT	0131 226 9270
Margaret Devine (Elected Member)	Councillor	<a href="mailto:margaret.devine@renfrewshire.gov.uk">margaret.devine@renfrewshire.gov.uk</a>	Floor 1, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley	0141 618 7132
Derek Bibby (Elected Member)	Councillor	<a href="mailto:derek.bibby@renfrewshire.gov.uk">derek.bibby@renfrewshire.gov.uk</a>	Floor 1, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley	0141 618 7122
Iain McMillan (Elected Member)	Councillor	<a href="mailto:iain.mcmillan@renfrewshire.gov.uk">iain.mcmillan@renfrewshire.gov.uk</a>	Floor 1, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley	0141 618 7120
Maria Brown (Elected Member)	Councillor	<a href="mailto:maria.brown@renfrewshire.gov.uk">maria.brown@renfrewshire.gov.uk</a>	Floor 1, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley	0141 618 7141
Bill Perrie (Elected Member)	Councillor	<a href="mailto:bill.perrie@renfrewshire.gov.uk">bill.perrie@renfrewshire.gov.uk</a>	Floor 1, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley	0141 618 7147
Eileen McCartin (Elected Member)	Councillor	<a href="mailto:eileen.mccartin@renfrewshire.gov.uk">eileen.mccartin@renfrewshire.gov.uk</a>	Floor 1, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley	0141 618 7117
Dr Umesh (Medical Advisor)	Doctor	Shivanna.umesh@nhs.net	Panda Centre, Royal Alexandra Hospital, Corsebar Road, Paisley	0141 887 9111
Dr Routray (Medical Advisor)	Doctor	<a href="mailto:Rashmi.Routray@ggc.scot.nhs.uk">Rashmi.Routray@ggc.scot.nhs.uk</a>	Foxbar Clinic, Morar Drive, Paisley, PA2 9QR	01505 324 337
Cathie O'Donnell (Senior Social Worker)	Panel Adviser	<a href="mailto:joyce.mcnaughton@renfrewshire.gsx.gov.uk">joyce.mcnaughton@renfrewshire.gsx.gov.uk</a>	Abbey House, 8 Seedhill Road, Paisley, PA1 1JT	0300 300 1199
Patricia Pryce (Legal Advisor)	Senior Solicitor	<a href="mailto:patricia.pryce@renfrewshire.gov.uk">patricia.pryce@renfrewshire.gov.uk</a>	Floor 1, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley	0141 618 7159

Christine Adam (Legal Advisor)	Senior Solicitor	<a href="mailto:christine.adam@renfrewshire.gov.uk">christine.adam@renfrewshire.gov.uk</a>	Floor 1, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley	0141 618 7176
Susan Fallone (Legal Advisor)	Senior Solicitor	<a href="mailto:Susan.fallone@renfrewshire.gov.uk">Susan.fallone@renfrewshire.gov.uk</a>	Floor 1, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley	0141 618 7161
Zoey Hillman	Carer			
Sean Doyle	Carer			
David Denholm	Independent Panel Member			
Ruth Neil		<a href="mailto:Ruth.Neil@uws.ac.uk">Ruth.Neil@uws.ac.uk</a>	Paisley University, High Street, Paisley, PA1 2BE	0141 848 3777
Belinda McEwan	Child Protection Co-Ordinator	<a href="mailto:Belinda.mcewan@renfrewshore.gsx.gov.uk">Belinda.mcewan@renfrewshore.gsx.gov.uk</a>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley	0141 618 6837

## Appendix 2





## **Renfrewshire Council Adoption Criteria**

### **Age**

All applicants must be over 21 years of age.

### **Status**

Enquiries will be considered from couples who wish to make joint application to adopt a child.

A couple may be the same sex or unmarried. Same sex couples are not required to be in a Civil Partnership.

Joint applicants must be in an enduring family relationship.

Single applicants will also be considered.

### **Preparation Groups**

Enquiries will be required to attend preparation groups, if groups are available, prior to making a formal application. The purpose of these groups is to provide enquiries with the opportunity to learn more about the children available for adoption, their backgrounds and the genetic factors adopters may have to consider when parenting adopted children.

If preparation groups are not available other means will be considered to provide and share information with enquiries.

### **Infertility**

Prospective adopters should have completed infertility investigations at least 6 months prior to application.

### **Local Authority Health and Police Checks**

All applicants will be subject to stringent local authority health and police checks. These will extend to any other resident in the household over 16 years of age and to anyone who will have care of the child.