
To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board

On: 18 May 2023

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Heading: Care Inspectorate Inspection of Renfrewshire's Adoption Service

1. Summary

- 1.1 Renfrewshire's Adoption Services is registered with and regulated by the Care Inspectorate. The Care Inspectorate conducts inspections of all regulated services and produces reports on their findings. The Adoption Service was inspected by the Care Inspectorate between January and March 2023. The previous inspection of the Service was conducted and reported on in 2017.
 - 1.2 The Care Inspectorate publishes the inspection reports on its website. The reports contain a grade in each of the themes inspected. Inspections are focused on improvement and within the inspection report the Care Inspectorate can identify an area for improvement, make a recommendation or put in place a requirement which is legally enforceable.
 - 1.3 The inspection of the Adoption Service focused on two quality indicators: "How well do we support people's wellbeing?" and "How well is our care and support planned?". The Care Inspectorate graded the Adoption Service as good for the first indicator and very good for the second indicator.
 - 1.4 No recommendations or requirements were made by the Care Inspectorate in relation to the Renfrewshire Adoption Service. One area of improvement was identified for the Adoption Service in relation to ensuring that children who need substitute care do not experience delay in planning and the service continues to evaluate practice in this area. A copy of the inspection report is attached at appendix 1.
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2. Recommendations

2.1 The Education and Children's Services Policy Board is asked to note

- [a] the positive outcome of the Care Inspectorate inspection of the Renfrewshire Adoption Service, and
 - [b] the positive support provided by staff in the Adoption Service.
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3. Background

3.1. The Care Inspectorate is the national scrutiny body for social work and social care services in Scotland. All Individual Adoption Services in Scotland are required to register with the Care Inspectorate and are subject to a range of audit and scrutiny activities to ensure that they are undertaking all statutory duties and providing appropriate care and support to individuals and groups that they are required to support. All registered services are subject to regular inspection by the Care Inspectorate.

3.2. At the end of each inspection, the Care Inspectorate produces a report in relation to the inspection and assigns a grade to each of the areas considered during the inspection. The Care Inspectorate makes use of the following scale for grading a service:

- 1. Unsatisfactory
- 2. Weak
- 3. Adequate
- 4. Good
- 5. Very good
- 6. Excellent

3.3. The Renfrewshire Adoption Service was the subject of an announced inspection by the Care Inspectorate between January and March 2023. The Care Inspectorate focused on two quality indicators during the inspection; : "How well do we support people's wellbeing?" and "How well is our care and support planned?". The Care Inspectorate graded the Adoption Service as good for the first indicator and very good for the second indicator.

3.4. The Care Inspectorate highlighted 6 key messages in relation to Renfrewshire's Adoption Service:

- Children and young people developed meaningful, affectionate, and secure relationships with their caregiver families.
- Children experienced highly personalised care and support.
- Caregiver families enjoy enduring, positive relationships with staff withing the service.
- Caregivers were comprehensively assessed.

- Some children experienced delays in permanence plans.
 - Post adoption support was creative and well planned.
- 3.5. The care inspectorate highlighted that they were able to see evidence that the service promoted children's relationships with their birth families and their brothers and sisters.
 - 3.6. The inspectors noted that the service promoted children's relationships with their birth families through our birth connections work.
 - 3.7. They also noted that children's transitions plans to their new families were dynamic, flexible, and supported by current trauma informed practice.
 - 3.8. One area of improvement was identified for the Adoption Service in relation to ensuring that children who need substitute care do not experience delay in planning and the service continues to evaluate practice in this area. Action has already been taken by the service to improve on this area and has been incorporated in the Adoption Service development plan for 2023/24.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - None
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - None
3. **Community/Council Planning** – engaging with, and learning from external inspection, ensures that our Renfrewshire is thriving: high standards of care ensures that children and young people are given the best start in life so that they promote and contribute to a more prosperous, fairer society.

The inspection process also supports delivery of the Council Plan crosscutting theme of improving outcomes for children and families as well as other Council Plan key strategic outcomes, for example:

4. **Legal** – None
5. **Property/Assets** - None
6. **Information Technology** - None
7. **Equality & Human Rights** -
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. 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.

8. **Health & Safety** - None
9. **Procurement** – None
10. **Risk** - None
11. **Privacy Impact** - None
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – N/A
13. **Climate Risk** - None

List of Background Papers - None

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Renfrewshire Council Adoption Service Adoption Service

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Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
1 March 2023

Service provided by:
Renfrewshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003388

Service no:
CS2004085691

About the service

Renfrewshire Council Adoption Service provides a service for children and young people aged from birth to 18 years old and their families. The service recruits and supports adoptive parents to provide families for those children who cannot be with their birth parents or extended family members, and whose needs have been assessed as best met in an adoptive family.

About the inspection

This was a short notice announced inspection which took place between 18 January 2023 and 1 March 2023. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service, Care Inspectorate questionnaires and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations, we spoke with;

- seven adopters and 15 completed the survey
- five children and two completed the survey
- four external professionals and 11 completed the survey
- eleven staff and managers and two completed the survey.

We also observed practice at the fostering and adoption panel.

Key messages

- Children and young people developed meaningful, affectionate and secure relationships with their caregiver families.
- Children experienced highly personalised care and support.
- Caregiver families enjoy enduring, positive relationships with staff within the service.
- Caregivers were comprehensively assessed.
- Some children experienced delays in permanency plans.
- Post adoption support was creative and well planned.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	4 - Good
How well is our care and support planned?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How well do we support people's wellbeing?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children and young people's experiences.

Children and young people developed meaningful, affectionate, and secure relationships with their caregiver families. Relationships were based on empathy, compassion, trust, predictability, love and fun. As a result, they have a strong sense of belonging and worth. They were enabled to feel fulfilment in life, and to create positive memories.

Children experienced highly personalised care and support from their caregiver families that understood their individual strengths and preferences. Caregivers supported children to manage health and educational needs and recover from trauma with a therapeutic approach. Through using evidence-based, therapeutic techniques and well-planned, dynamic, transitions, the service promotes these relationships from the outset of the matching process.

Caregiver families enjoyed enduring, positive relationships with staff within the service. They were actively supported and encouraged, through training and reflective practice discussions, to provide loving, nurturing families for children and young people. The learning culture in the team ensured that staff had the skills and experience to offer a high level of support to the caregivers, children and young people they were working with.

Children and young people were living with their siblings, where this was appropriate, and there had been creative practice to ensure siblings could be kept together thus promoting enduring relationships.

The service also promoted children's relationships with their birth families through their birth connections work and a pro-active and inclusive approach to letter exchange. This reduced further experiences of loss and trauma resulting from separation and ensured the children's wider sense of identity.

Children and young people living within caregiver families had been kept safe both emotionally and physically. The service fully implemented national guidance and best practice in child protection and had a clear overview of incidents and accidents.

Caregiver families were comprehensively assessed by skilled, knowledgeable, and compassionate staff. The assessments ensured that caregivers had the capacity to meet the needs of the children and young people, they were caring for. However, there was some uncertainty regarding the expectations and role of the pre-adoptive foster carer. Adopters told us that they were unsure about the difference in their role pre and post adoption and felt they could be better supported to attend some of the children's meetings prior to adoption orders being granted. The service should ensure that staff and foster carers are aware of all of their responsibilities during the time between children moving in and the adoption order being granted.

At the time of inspection, we found evidence of long delays in some children's permanence plans. While the service swiftly progressed plans for children under five, we found that there was a limited overview of the permanency planning for some of the children in the service and outcomes for some young people had been impacted by this. The management team had a plan in place to address these issues and were well placed to make immediate improvements and we have made an area for improvement regarding this. (Area for improvement 1)

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure that children in need of permanent substitute care do not experience delay in planning, the service should continue to evaluate practice in relation to permanence.

This should include but is not limited to, ongoing monitoring of timescales and clearly advocating for the young people using the service.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

"As a child or young person needing permanent alternative care, I experience this without unnecessary delay" (HSCS 1.16)

How well is our care and support planned?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children and young people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

People that were assessed to adopt were comprehensively and robustly assessed by skilled and knowledgeable staff. The assessments accurately reflected their capacity to parent and also reflected their views and wishes. The service had also creatively introduced family support network meetings and adopters found these to be an invaluable and significant support.

Children's transition plans to their new families were dynamic, flexible and supported by current, trauma informed practice. This ensured the experience was as positive as possible for children and prevented children from experiencing prolonged regression after a significant change.

Children, young people and their caregivers experienced very good outcomes which were supported by high quality multi-agency and individualised adoption support planning. Adults who were at various stages of the adoption process, confidently knew the next stage in the process and where to seek out support if this was required.

Post adoption support plans were written in a SMART way and considered the young people and adopters future and current needs.

Children and young people benefited from plans that were reviewed, evaluated and updated involving relevant professionals. The service took a pro-active approach of allocating a supervising social worker for a year post adoption and this ensured continuity during this potentially fragile time. The practice of holding planning meetings following the granting of adoption orders offered an opportunity to robustly consider how best to support the children and their caregivers. This ensured that children and young people benefited from responsive, timely and creative support.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	4 - Good
1.1 Children, young people, adults and their caregiver families experience compassion, dignity and respect	5 - Very Good
1.2 Children, young people and adults get the most out of life	5 - Very Good
1.3 Children, young people and adults' health and wellbeing benefits from the care and support they experience	5 - Very Good
1.4 Children, young people, adults and their caregiver families get the service that is right for them	4 - Good
How well is our care and support planned?	5 - Very Good
5.1 Assessment and care planning reflects the outcomes and wishes of children, young people and adults	5 - Very Good

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