

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Director of Community Health & Care Partnership

Community Health and Care Partnership Committee: 20th August 2014

Subject: Care Inspectorate Reports for Children & Young People's Services operated by West Dunbartonshire Council

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide Members with information regarding the most recent inspection reports for the Council's Permanence and Adoption Service, and the Fostering Service.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the content of this report and that improvement work continues to be undertaken to ensure grades awarded reflect the quality levels expected by the Council.

3 Background

- 3.1 Care Inspectorate inspections focus on any combination of thematic areas. These themes are; quality of care and support, staffing and management & leadership.
- 3.2 The CHCP service covered in this Committee report are:
- The Permanence and Adoption Service
 - The Fostering Service
- 3.3 Copies of inspection reports for all services can be accessed on the Care Inspectorate web-site; www.scswis.com

4 Main IssuesThe Permanence and Adoption Service

- 4.1 This is the first inspection of the Permanence and Adoption service since the establishment of two separate services in 2013.
- 4.2 This stand-alone inspection of the Permanence and Adoption service in November 2013 should be considered within the context of the grades awarded to the previous Fostering Service in June 2013. Whilst these services are registered separately they are inextricably linked and have the same line management structure. The areas of strength and areas for

development identified in June 2013 were therefore applicable to both services.

4.3 The service and manager had worked hard to address the requirements and recommendation from the earlier Fostering inspection and to implement the action plan timeously. The service was also keen to have an opportunity to have an early inspection and this was discussed with the Care Inspectorate. It was agreed therefore that they would carry out their first full inspection of the Permanence and Adoption Service towards the end of 2013 and then undertake a review inspection of the Fostering service early in 2014.

4.4 The Permanence and Adoption Service was inspected between the 25 and 29th of November 2013 and the report published on the 13 December 2013 the following grades were awarded:

- Quality of Care and Support - Grade 4/ Good
- Quality of Staffing - Grade 4 / Good
- Quality of Management and Leadership - Grade 3/Adequate

4.5 Whilst these grades remain inadequate and therefore are disappointing, the inspection took place a mere four months after the Fostering inspection of 2013 which had resulted in very poor grades as reported to Committee in November 2013. In comparison to the previous grades awarded to the Fostering service the grades awarded to the Permanence and Adoption team some four months later reflect an improvement in all areas of the service. The inspection report recognised that the services own self-assessment, submitted before the inspection had recognised many of the short falls and were already working towards addressing the gaps. The inspector made the following comment within the report on the self-assessment;

“Information given was comprehensive and the service demonstrated an honest and open approach to assessing its performance.”

4.6 There were no requirements made of the service and two recommendations were made. The first recommendation stated; *“The service should ensure staff members benefit from regular appraisal of their performance and a planned training programme.”*

4.7 Staff now have regular monthly supervision, and all have Personal Development Plans (PDPs) and individual and team training needs are identified and addressed through this process.

4.8 The second recommendation made relates to *“ensuring that members of the approval panel benefit from relevant training and receive supervision and appraisal.”* A training programme has been developed and commenced for panel members and a series of business meetings established to allow consideration of aspects of panel business and enable members to review the process and function of the panel and their roles and responsibilities.

4.9 Particular note was made by the Inspector of “a motivated and knowledgeable staff team who work together effectively to provide good quality support to adopters throughout the adoption process. The team has established good partnership working arrangements, most notably with specialist children’s health services and area team staff. This has resulted in good outcomes for adopted children.”

The Fostering Service

4.10 The Fostering Service was inspected between the 10th and 11th of March 2014. This most recent inspection was undertaken as a review inspection following the placement of requirements on the service when last inspected in June 2013. A new report on the service was issued following the return of the inspectors in March 2014.

4.11 The following grades were awarded

- Quality of Care and Support - Grade 4 / Good
- Quality of staffing - Grade 4 /Good
- Quality of Management and Leadership - Grade 4/ Good

4.12 The table below sets out the movement in grades for the service over the last two inspections:

Service	Previous Grades						Current Grades March 2014					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
	June 2013						March 2014					
WDC Fostering Service												
• Quality of Care & support			√							√		
• Quality of Staffing			√							√		
• Management & Leadership		√								√		

4.13 The inspection report indicated that all 6 requirements previously identified had been achieved within the agreed timescales. These areas related to: placement agreement, health and home safety checks, PVG checks, reviews of carers, and carers operating within the category of registration. It was noted that effective systems for management of these areas of practice had been established which would assist the service adhere to statutory and regulatory requirements.

4.14 There were no requirements or recommendations made which reflects positive progress and the achievements and hard work of the team to address all issues previously identified. As well as meeting the requirements it was noted that “the service was continuing to develop improvement planning “. “The service aimed to continue to use developing electronic recording systems to monitor performance and identify any areas for improvement.”

4.15 All three themes were robustly inspected and grades, reflected steady progress. This was following a year where there had been a change of management with a new Assistant Principal Officer appointed to manage the Permanence and Adoption Service which has resulted in a restructuring of the Fostering and Adoption Team, and a new Looked After and Accommodated Children's Service Manager taking up post in August 2013. In addition a number of staff had moved to promoted posts and new social workers joined the team.

4.16 It was noted that despite the changes "*staff maintained a positive approach.*" *They told inspectors "they had been fully involved in discussion about the changes."* However in a small team no matter how well managed these changes were it was perhaps inevitable they would have an effect on the services performance.

5. People Implications

5.1 There are no people implications.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 For any service inspected, failure to meet requirements within the time-scales set out in their inspection report could result in a reduction in grading or enforcement action. This may have an impact on our ability to continue to deliver the service. In these inspections there were no requirements.

7.2 The service has been working together to implement a structured and comprehensive action plan to address areas for continuous improvement. A failure to implement the action plan could result in a further poor inspection that would be viewed seriously by inspectors and have a detrimental impact on the morale of the team and ultimately result in poorer outcomes for children.

7.3 The Head of Service is confident however that the action already taken and with the evident effective leadership of the manager and goodwill and hard work of a well-motivated staff group the next inspection will see improving grades.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

Not required for this report.

9. Consultation

Consultation is not required for this report.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1 These services contribute to the Council's Strategic Plan 2012-17 which identifies "improve life chances for children and young people" as one of the authority's five strategic priorities.

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Appendices: None

Background Papers: The information provided in Care Inspectorate Inspection Reports Web-site address: -
http://www.scswis.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=7909&Itemid=727

Wards Affected: All