

Inspection of Midlothian Council's Fostering, Adult Placement and Adoption Services**Joan Tranent, CSWO & Chief Officer Children's Services, Partnerships and Communities****Report for Information****1 Recommendations**

1. Cabinet are requested to note the findings of the latest Care Inspectorate report which took place between 11 to 29 September 2023.
2. Cabinet are requested to acknowledge the hard work undertaken by staff and foster carers, despite the many challenges they have faced in relation to the recruitment of permanent staff and foster carers.

2 Purpose of Report/Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to draw Cabinet's attention to the announced inspection of our Fostering, Adult Placement and Adoption services and the grades awarded. All care inspection reports are published on the Care Inspectorate website and available to the public.

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3 Background/

- 3.1 The Care Inspectorate is responsible for inspecting care services throughout Scotland. They do so by using the Health and Social Care Standards.

The headline standards are:

- 1: I experience high quality care and support that is right for me.
- 2: I am fully involved in all decisions about my care and support.
- 3: I have confidence in the people who support and care for me.
- 4: I have confidence in the organisation providing my care and support.
- 5: I experience a high-quality environment if the organisation provides the premises.

The inspection uses a *descriptive* statement and/or statements to evaluate how the service meets the 5 higher-level standards. The final grade is then calculated using an overall six-point scale ranging from unsatisfactory (1) to excellent (6).

- 3.2 For the purposes of this short notice (announced) inspection the *descriptive* statements used and associated grades were as follows:

Fostering Services

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate
How well is our care and support planned?	4 - Good

Adoption Services

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate
How well is our care and support planned?	3 - Adequate

Adult Placement Service

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate
How well is our care and support planned?	4 - Good

- 3.3 Midlothian Council was awarded an overall Grade 3 for all three services inspected. The inspection determined that the overall practice was adequate with a number of areas of good practice noted;

- Carers knew children and young people in their care well and relationships were built on empathy, compassion and trust. For many children and young people these relationships were stable and enduring.
- Young people were seen to achieve positive outcomes in relation to learning and education which were well supported by carers and by services working effectively together.

- Young people's views were known, and their voice had influence on the direction of their care and support.
- The service showed a clear commitment to ensuring brothers and sisters remained together.
- The importance of young people understanding their life story and of promoting a positive sense of identity was clear within caring households.

3.4 The inspection also highlighted improvement requirements and additional areas for improvement. The inspection feedback highlighted the challenges in relation to staffing capacity which has necessitated the use of locum social workers to cover vacancies. They acknowledged this was a national challenge but were concerned this would have had an impact on the ability of the service to drive forward and sustain improvements. Feedback also reflected the need for the service to have robust quality assurance mechanisms in place that are being used to support and evidence good practice.

3.5 An improvement plan has already been developed to support the identified requirements and areas for improvement. The newly appointed Family Centred Care Team Service Manager and Team Leader will manage this plan and regularly report on progress to the Social Work Assurance Group (SWAG).

4 Report Implications (Resource, Digital and Risk)

4.1 Resource

Not applicable.

4.2 Digital

Not applicable.

4.3 Risk

There are risk implications within the inspection findings. The workforce issue is both a local and national issue as is the recruitment of foster carers, both of which impact on the fostering services, adult placement and adoption services.

4.4 Ensuring Equalities

The service mission is for all care experienced children and young people to be provided with local quality services.

4.5 Additional Report Implications (See Appendix A)

APPENDIX A – Report Implications

A.1 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

The inspection feedback endorses our local approach to delivering services.

A.2 Key Drivers for Change

Key drivers addressed in this report:

- Holistic Working
- Hub and Spoke
- Modern
- Sustainable
- Transformational
- Preventative
- Asset-based
- Continuous Improvement
- One size fits one
- None of the above

A.3 Key Delivery Streams

Key delivery streams addressed in this report:

- One Council Working with you, for you
- Preventative and Sustainable
- Efficient and Modern
- Innovative and Ambitious
- None of the above

A.4 Delivering Best Value

Staff continue to strive to support children and young people and carers to deliver best value which the inspection improvement plan supports.

A.5 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

Staff work with many stakeholders including young people and their families to deliver holistic, sustainable services.

A.6 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

Our grades are below the current performance measure however the inspection improvement plan will support improved practice standards across all of the services inspected.

A.7 Adopting a Preventative Approach

Not applicable

A.8 Supporting Sustainable Development – not applicable

Appendix B - Midlothian Council Fostering Service Inspection Report

Appendix C - Midlothian Council Continuing Care Service Inspection Report

Appendix D - Midlothian Council Adoption Service Inspection report