

**Inspection of Hawthorn Children and Families Centre**

Report by Don Ledingham, Director, Education and Children's Services

**1 Purpose of Report**

This report outlines the outcome of the above unannounced inspection as carried out by the Care Inspectorate in November and December 2012.

**2 Background**

- 2.1 Hawthorn Children and Families Centre is based in Mayfield and is registered to accommodate 48 children between birth and entry into primary school. Currently there are 75 children on the register who use the service at different times. The main purpose of the service is to work with the most vulnerable children, in partnership with their parents/carers. The centre also works with children with a disability or affected by disability. The centre aims to ensure the safety of children through early intervention, and within this ensure they achieve the optimum health, development and educational attainment.
- 2.2 The Care Inspectorate is the independent scrutiny and improvement body for care and children's services and they inspect every registered care service, local authority social work departments and child protection teams on a regular basis to make sure that providers are meeting standards required and are working to improve the quality of care for everyone. Every time they inspect these services they produce an inspection report.
- 2.3 Based on the findings of this inspection the Care Inspectorate awarded the following grades:

Ensure that Service Users Health and Wellbeing Needs are met	Grade 6 - Excellent
Quality of Care and Support	Grade 6 – Excellent
Quality of Environment	Grade 5 – Very Good
Quality of Staffing	Grade 6 – Excellent
Quality of Management and Leadership	Grade 5 – Very Good
Service Users Participate in Improving Services	Grade 6 – Excellent

The report and grades represent the Care Inspectorate assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during the unannounced inspection.

#### 2.4 The Inspection Team noted the following strengths:

- The Centre works effectively in providing Early Intervention for vulnerable children and assistance to their families.
- The staff team work hard to ensure that families are given a warm welcome into the Centre. The Inspectors found children and families were respected and valued.
- The staff team were found to be committed to their own personal development and the undertaking of training to allow them to provide effective support for the children and the families they work with.
- The Centre continues to evaluate the service they provide and use their findings to further develop and improve the quality for the support provided to children and families.

#### 2.5 The Inspection Team reported that the authority could do better in the following area:

- Hawthorn Children and Families Centre should continue with their improvement plans which include the need to upgrade and refurbish the children's toilets and changing areas.

#### 2.6 The Care Inspectorate concluded that management and staff at Hawthorn Children and Families Centre are committed to ensuring they meet the aims and objectives of the Centre. The level of forethought and dedication to the support needs of new and existing families evidenced the high quality care and support provided.

### 3 Report Implications

#### 3.1 Resource

As a result of recommendations in the report, the Head of Property Services has arranged for the upgrade and refurbishment of the children's toilets and changing areas. The £18,000 costs arising from these works are being met from the existing 2012/13 revenue planned maintenance budget.

#### 3.2 Risk

The Care Inspectorate regulate all care services in Scotland using the [National Care Standards](#), set out by the Scottish Government, as a benchmark for how each type of service should perform. These standards are the minimum that children and young people should expect when using care services.

If the standards are not being fully met, the Care Inspectorate would note this in the inspection report and require the service manager to address these. The Care Inspectorate could impose an additional condition on the service's registration if the provider persistently, substantially or seriously fails to meet the standards or breaches a regulation. They also have the power to issue an improvement notice

detailing the required improvement to be made and the timescale for this.

Monitoring, review and evaluation of progress by officers in Children and Families is the control measure in place to reduce the risk of failure of the care services and to demonstrate their capacity to improve.

### **3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation**

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☐ Community safety
- ☐ Adult health, care and housing
- ☒ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☐ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☐ Sustainable growth
- ☐ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

### **3.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes**

Performance and outcomes will continue to be measured through the monitoring, review and evaluation process.

### **3.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach**

The Centre will continue to improve its work in line with its improvement plan and the Education and Children's Services Division will continue to challenge and support the Centre in relation to developing and implementing a range of quality improvement strategies.

### **3.6 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders**

As part of their inspection process the Care Inspectorate sent out 15 questionnaires to the service to give to parents and carers who used the Centre. Six completed questionnaires were returned prior to the inspection. The contents of the questionnaires were used to inform the Care Inspectorate findings and are referred to in the Inspection Report.

The Inspectors also met with parents and carers during the course of the inspection.

Copies of the report have been made available to Elected Members, parents/carers of children in the Centre, staff and other interested parties.

### **3.7 Ensuring Equalities**

An action plan has been prepared to address the areas for improvement recommended in the report. The action plan will be screened for equalities implications.

### **3.8 Supporting Sustainable Development**

The Centre Improvement Plan allows for sustainable development and improvement.

### **3.9 IT Issues**

There are no IT issues arising from this report.

## 5 Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) note the content of the inspection report;
- (ii) pass this report to the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee for its consideration;
- (iii) congratulate the Management and staff connected with Hawthorn Children and Families Centre on the excellent work being carried out at the Centre; and
- (iv) note that, whilst acknowledging the excellent work being carried out at the Centre, the Council will continue to challenge, support and monitor the service in relation to achieving excellence through further improving performance.

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### **Background Papers:**

Care Services Inspection Report dated 18 January 2013

