

Aberdeenshire Council - Adoption Service

Adoption Service

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Type of inspection: Announced (short notice)
Inspection completed on: 23 March 2017

Service provided by:
Aberdeenshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000029

Care service number:
CS2004084094

About the service

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Information about all care services is available on our website at www.careinspectorate.com

This service has been registered since 2005.

Aberdeenshire Council Adoption Agency provides an adoption service for children and young people aged from birth to 18 years and their families who are assessed as in need of this service. The agency recruits and supports adoptive parents to provide families for those children who cannot live with their birth parents or extended family members whose needs have been assessed in relation to adoption.

Staff within the service are located throughout the Aberdeenshire Area, most are co-located with social work fieldwork teams, and this means that there are staff in most areas within the council boundary.

What people told us

We spoke with post adopters and they told us that they received excellent support from this service. We were told that they could get in touch whenever they could.

Self assessment

The service submitted a full and considered self-assessment.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	6 - Excellent
Quality of staffing	6 - Excellent
Quality of management and leadership	not assessed

What the service does well

Aberdeenshire Council - Adoption Service is an exceptionally well-managed service for children who are assessed by the local authority as being in need of adoption. The service recruits and supports adoptive parents to provide families for children who cannot live with their birth families and whose needs have been assessed as being best met in an adoptive family. The service is based in Inverurie in Aberdeenshire and is delivered by a passionate, committed and highly motivated staff team. There is clear commitment to aim for excellent practice and continual improvement in every aspect of the service delivery and this is clearly driven by an enthusiastic and dynamic service manager who has led the team to work towards some remarkable improvements in the service over the past year, particularly in permanence planning.

Processes in Aberdeenshire were timeous from the adopter's initial enquiry to being allocated a worker to begin the assessment process. Preparation groups were developed and delivered by the team who continually progressed them based on adopter feedback. Adopters reported extremely high quality inputs from the preparation groups, particularly where they heard directly from children or young people who had experienced adoption. They told us that staff were fully supportive, inclusive and respectful of both themselves and their

wider families when undertaking assessment processes. We found Form F's (the assessment tool used in Aberdeenshire to assess prospective adopters) to be reflective, analytical and well-considered in their conclusions.

Linking meeting minutes evidenced detailed and well measured matches and addressed how adopter's abilities would meet the needs of the child or children. These processes were entirely inclusive of adopters and they told us that they felt informed and supported throughout the linking and matching developments. Furthermore, we found that children were receiving the best supports in their placements as a result of informed care. Adopters that we spoke with told us that introductions were quick and that highly skilled foster carers made the experience exceptionally supportive and positive and some foster carers remained in contact with the children and the adopter's after placements had been made. Adopters told us this was very beneficial for all parties.

Where appropriate, birth parents and adoptive parents were encouraged to meet and discuss children at relevant stages of the adoption process. Adopters told us that they valued these introductions as they felt it would benefit children in the long-term in terms of their identity.

Overall, adopters spoke very highly of the skills and knowledge of the staff team and, in particular, about their ability to carry out assessments in a professional and respectful manner. We found the staff team were highly driven, motivated in all aspects of adoption and they were being supported well by an encouraging management team. Both staff and management presented to us as entirely committed to providing the best possible outcomes for children using the service and we found that they were highly effective in delivering opportunities for this to be achieved.

The importance of getting it right for children was apparent in all processes and central to the decision making. Staff were not afraid to present a professional challenge where they felt that this was not happening. The team worked closely with their area teams to support permanence planning. This area had been significantly advanced over the past year with the service boasting impressive figures in permanence work. Worked alongside CELCIS (Centre for Excellence for looked after children in Scotland) the service has revolutionised how Aberdeenshire Council assess and progress plans for looked after children. This has meant that internal decision making has been clearer and quicker for children from the outset. Historical drift has significantly reduced and 100% of new cases are being progressed within nine months. The service has received various awards of high accolade based upon the impressive improvements they have made.

What the service could do better

Aberdeenshire Council should continue to develop and innovate in all areas of service delivery. The service development plan reflects the teams aspirations to drive improvement and continue to push best practice and deliver exceptional outcomes for all children using the service.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Complaints

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

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
11 Feb 2015	Announced (short notice)	<div>Care and support</div> <div>4 - Good</div> <div>Environment</div> <div>Not assessed</div> <div>Staffing</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Management and leadership</div> <div>5 - Very good</div>
29 Jan 2014	Announced	<div>Care and support</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Environment</div> <div>Not assessed</div> <div>Staffing</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Management and leadership</div> <div>5 - Very good</div>
1 Feb 2013	Announced (short notice)	<div>Care and support</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Environment</div> <div>Not assessed</div> <div>Staffing</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Management and leadership</div> <div>5 - Very good</div>
15 Dec 2010	Announced	<div>Care and support</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Environment</div> <div>Not assessed</div> <div>Staffing</div> <div>Not assessed</div> <div>Management and leadership</div> <div>Not assessed</div>
18 Mar 2010	Announced	<div>Care and support</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Environment</div> <div>Not assessed</div> <div>Staffing</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Management and leadership</div> <div>Not assessed</div>
19 Feb 2009	Announced	<div>Care and support</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Environment</div> <div>Not assessed</div> <div>Staffing</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Management and leadership</div> <div>4 - Good</div>

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