

East Renfrewshire Council Adoption Service Adoption Service

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Telephone: 0141 451 0725

Type of inspection:

Announced (short notice)

Completed on:

11 October 2019

Service provided by:

East Renfrewshire Council

Service provider number:

SP2003003372

Service no:

CS2004082369

About the service

East Renfrewshire Council's Adoption Service has been registered since 22 December 2005, and transferred its registration to the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011. The service recruits and supports adoptive parents to provide families for children who cannot live with their birth parents or extended family members, and whose needs have been assessed as best met in an adoptive family.

East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire Councils work in partnership to find adopters for children living in the area who need life long families.

The service's stated aim is to:

'Recruit and assess a range of adoptive families who fully understand the complex lifelong tasks that they need to fulfil in meeting the needs of children who require adoptive families.'

As part of the redesign of Children's Services in East Renfrewshire, within a tiered model of targeted intervention, Adoption and Fostering services now sit within intensive services and family support. This change was introduced in order to prioritise resources more effectively.

The service continues to work with the Scottish Adoption Advice Service (SAAS) to provide post adoption support for individuals who are adopted, adopters or birth family.

The fostering service is part of East Renfrewshire's Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), that brings together community health services and social work services.

East Renfrewshire Fostering Service was inspected at the same time and a separate report is available.

What people told us

We spoke with five adopters and received two completed care standard questionnaires.

All adopters who contributed to the inspection told us that they thought their supervising social workers were professional and skilled in their work. Adopters overwhelmingly spoke highly about the support they had received from social workers.

Some of the comments we received included:

"Staff went above and beyond during all parts of the process"

"We were given very good preparation for panel"

"Our social worker dropped everything to support us during a difficult period"

"The team's professionalism is outstanding"

"I recently attended the Stan Godek training and felt included as there were also foster carers there"

Self assessment

There was no self-assessment requested for this inspection year. We met with the managers and reviewed development plans which informed our inspection of progress the service was making.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of staffing	5 - Very Good
Quality of management and leadership	not assessed

What the service does well

During this inspection we found that the Adoption Service recruited and supported prospective adopters very well. Adopters confirmed that the assessment process had been very thorough. Assessments were comprehensive and very well written with a clear analysis of the strengths and abilities of potential adopters to meet the needs of vulnerable children.

Adopters told us that the preparation training was beneficial to helping them understand the needs of children requiring adoption and the care and support which would be required. Adopters reported high quality inputs from adopters, the medical advisor and a Barnardos staff member.

Where appropriate, birth parents and adoptive parents were supported to meet and discuss children at the relevant stage 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. A support group for birth families was at the early stages of formation and we look forward to reviewing the outcomes from this development in future inspections.

We were pleased to see that the authority is utilising the PACE (Permanence and Care Excellence, a Scottish Government approach to permanence) programme and that all aims have been achieved. We saw significantly improved timescales for achieving permanence for children and young people. The service are launching the use of the 'Signs of Safety' strength based, relational approach and in conjunction with PACE we look forward to seeing further improvements to outcomes and timescales at the next inspection.

We could see that the process of linking and matching children clearly highlighted the strengths and vulnerabilities of potential matches. Adopters told us that they received important information about children, including about their health, birth families and early life experiences. This meant the prospective adopters were informed about the potential needs of the child they had been matched. The medical advisor met with adopters to help them develop a deeper understanding of the child's health needs. We found some very good outcomes for children who had been adopted. This included children reaching developmental milestones, achieving academically, improved emotional wellbeing and thriving as part of a nurturing family.

Panel members provided a high level of quality assurance to the service and they told us that the quality of adoption assessments presented to them helped to make an informed decision.

Since the last inspection, the service has introduced quarterly support groups which we heard are well attended. Adopters we spoke with were aware of post adoption support and some had used this for advice and guidance

and additional support. In addition to this, adopters are invited to training alongside foster carers and multi-disciplinary staff which supported them to feel confident and well prepared.

Staff members told us that morale was very good and that the team worked well together. The team impressed as competent and confident in their role and worked effectively with inter-agency and multi-agency partners. A child's social worker told us, "I feel we are just part of one big team because we all work so closely together".

Management were described as supportive, approachable and inclusive which was valued and appreciated. The enhanced leadership opportunities, including the new position of advanced practitioner, continuing care/representative at Scottish throughcare and aftercare forum, practice teaching and panel advisor confirmed this approach. Training opportunities were described as very good, although staff considered a need for training in therapeutic working. We were told this was being addressed.

A safer recruitment exercise of one workers file evidenced that safer recruitment practices were being followed with checks conducted before commencing employment. Checks with the Scottish Social Services Council register was carried out within HSCP administration support, this was the only part of the Safer Recruitment process that was not carried out by the wider council Human Resources department.

What the service could do better

Whilst we found that there were detailed linking and matching minutes from East Renfrewshire, we noted that in a few cases these were not present where the meeting had taken place in another local authority. Given the close working relationships noted in other areas of practice we asked the service to make efforts to secure minutes of these meetings. During feedback we had a similar discussion about the need to consistently receive copies of adoption support plans from other authorities.

During our inspection we were impressed to see the collaboration between corporate parents and the champions board. This was ambitious and highly effective with the initiatives in education, health and leisure some of the highlights. We noted that the champions board had supported the development of interview questions for staff interviews. We wondered if the champions board could undertake a similar task for questions from young people during the panel process.

We suggested the team meeting could benefit from being held more frequently with clearer recording of the progress of actions points. We were told this would be addressed.

We were satisfied that child protection policies and procedures were in place, however, noted that these required to be reviewed and updated as a priority.

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.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection

Previous recommendations

Recommendation 1

The service should ensure that adopters are provided with opportunities to widen their knowledge of adoption through the provision of a post adoption support group.

National Care Standards, Adoption Agencies
Standard 30 Support After Adoption.

This recommendation was made on 2 November 2016.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The service have now implemented adoption support groups which take place quarterly.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
2 Nov 2016	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing
		5 - Very good Not assessed Not assessed

Date	Type	Gradings	
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good
19 Feb 2015	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good
24 Mar 2014	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good
28 Mar 2012	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good
20 Jan 2011	Announced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
31 Mar 2010	Announced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
31 Mar 2009	Announced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good

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