

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE– 21 MAY 2019**

**REPORT ON THE ANGUS ADOPTION AGENCY AND THE FOSTERING PANEL – ANNUAL  
REPORT 2018-2019**

**REPORT BY KATHRYN LINDSAY DIRECTOR – CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND JUSTICE**

**ABSTRACT**

This report informs members of the production of the Annual Report on the Angus Adoption Agency and the Fostering Panel. The report highlights Angus Council's ability to provide an effective service for children, foster carers and adoptive parents and notes demand on resources as well as services provided. A copy of the annual report is appended.

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) Endorse the Angus Adoption Agency and Fostering Panel Annual Report and support the future plans;
- (ii) Notes that the Report will be made publically available on the Council Website

**2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS LOCAL OUTCOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN/CORPORATE PLAN**

This report contributes to the following local outcomes:

- Our children and young people are confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens
- Individuals and families are involved in decisions which affect them
- We have improved the health and well being of our people and inequalities are reduced.

**3. BACKGROUND**

Angus Council has a statutory duty, under Section 1 of the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007, to provide an adoption service. The service required under this provision is for all those affected by adoption, including child, birth parent, sibling, natural grandparent, guardian and adoptive parent. It must make suitable arrangements for the assessment of prospective adopters, of children who may be adopted, and for placing children for adoption. The Act and subsidiary legislation requires the Council to establish an Adoption Panel. Regulation 17 of the Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009 imposes an equivalent duty on the Local Authority to establish a Fostering Panel. Local authorities are also required to report on the operation of their adoption agency on an annual basis. Angus Council has panels for both.

**4. CURRENT POSITION**

4.1 The Annual Report on the Angus Adoption Agency and the Fostering Panel provides information for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019. Key issues from the report include

4.2 **Establishment of a Permanence Forum for children**

A Permanence Forum has been introduced from April 2018 to provide a more streamlined and consistent approach to progressing plans for children. Twenty eight children have been considered and plans put in place to progress permanence where appropriate.

#### 4.3 **Service Review**

Children, Families and Justice have had a review of management structures and services which has seen the development of carers support services with 3 teams, each focusing on fostering, permanence and kinship. This sits alongside residential services in the resource service area which has a focus on ensuring consistency of care and approach for all our looked after and accommodated children.

#### 4.4 **Establishment of a Kinship team**

As part of the service review and in recognition of changes in legislation regarding kinship care, a kinship team has been established with the focus to assess and offer guidance and support to kinship carers. There has been a significant increase in the number of children being placed with kinship families and we aim to focus on practice and the development of this area of business in 2019.

#### 4.5 **Introduction of a Shared Services Panel Coordinator**

Since August 2018 a shared services panel coordinator has been appointed to work jointly across both Angus and Dundee Councils to organise and administer the panel system. The coordinator has responsibility for scheduling panel business; quality assurance of the work submitted, ensuring that the panel operates in line with regulations and sits on each panel as panel adviser. The coordinator also has responsibility for maintaining the panel membership and panel development.

#### 4.6 **Inspection of Adoption Agency and Fostering Services**

The services were inspected in June 2018 and were graded as good in all areas. We were inspected on areas in relation to quality of care and support and quality of staffing. There were no recommendations and no requirements. It was noted we have well skilled teams and offer a wide range of training and support to our carers who provide good quality care to our children as well as support to foster carers and adopters. The inspection highlighted delays for children in need of permanence in terms of planning for children that required to improve. The service was made aware that we need to progress assessments timeously.

#### 4.7 **Recruitment of prospective adoptive parents and foster carers**

Increasing the number of approved carers remains key to achieving better outcomes for Looked After Children. We continue to invest and develop our social media campaign with the catch phrase "Change lives for the better. Adopt or foster an Angus child today". There is ongoing competition locally from the private adoption and fostering agencies and we need to ensure that our approach to recruitment remains competitive given the scarce resources in this area and the ongoing needs of children who require to be fostered or permanently cared for.

### 5. **PROPOSALS**

It is proposed that Committee endorse the Angus Adoption Agency and Fostering Panel Annual Report and support the future plans.

### 6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising out of this report.

**NOTE:** No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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List of Appendices: Adoption Agency Annual Report 2018/19