Item No. 12

Meeting Date **Wednesday 7th February 2024**

Glasgow City
Integration Joint Board
Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee

Report By: **Mike Burns, Assistant Chief Officer, Children's Services**

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Families for Children Adoption and Fostering Service
- Care Inspectorate Activity and Update

Purpose of Report:	To inform the IJB Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee of the outcome of the inspection of Glasgow City HSCP's fostering and adoption services and the action plans created as a result of the inspections.

Background/Engagement:	Glasgow City HSCP Fostering, and Adoption Services were subject to a short notice inspection which took place between 16th May and 15th June 2023. The inspection was carried out by the Care Inspectorate.

Governance Route:	The matters contained within this paper have been previously considered by the following group(s) as part of its development. HSCP Senior Management Team ☐ Council Corporate Management Team ☐ Health Board Corporate Management Team ☐ Council Committee ☐ Update requested by IJB ☐ Other ☒ Not Applicable ☐

Recommendations:	The IJB Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee is asked to: a) note the fostering and adoption inspection findings; and b) note the fostering and adoption action plans.

Relevance to Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan:
Strong, high quality Families For Children services support the delivery of key strategic priorities of Strengthening Communities to Reduce Harm, and Building a Sustainable Future.

Implications for Health and Social Care Partnership:

Reference to National Health & Wellbeing Outcome:	Foster care and adoption contributes to some of the key National outcomes in terms of improving outcomes for children and young people and improving support for foster carers and adopters in order to ensure that children and young people who use health and social care services have positive experiences of those services, and have their dignity respected. Key to any improvements is to ensure that children and young people are safe from harm and delivering effective services which make efficient use of health and social care services. Such outcomes are aligned to the HSCP's transformation of Children's services agenda and the desire to shift the balance of care, and secure better outcomes for all children and young people living in the City.

Personnel:	Some staff may be asked to work differently to support the development of tests of change in order to explore approaches which are effective in meeting children, young people and carers' needs.

Carers:	Foster carers and adopters are key to the effective delivery of services and meeting good permanence outcomes for care experienced children and young people. This paper presents the outcome of recent inspection of the fostering and adoption services, and references proposals for improving the services, taking into account the findings of the inspection and feedback from children, young people and carers.

Provider Organisations:	None.

Equalities:	The report is referencing current practice and outcomes, and proposals for next steps, and as such an EQIA is not deemed necessary at this stage. The wider Children's Transformation Programme, of which the work detailed in this report is a part, has been subject to a recent EQIA. .

Fairer Scotland Compliance:	The Children's Transformation Programme actively seeks to reduce inequalities and to support children, young people and carers to improve their quality of life and reduce the impact of health and social inequalities.

Financial:	Some of the requirements and recommendations made within the inspection reports may have financial implications which, if to be considered, require further scrutiny.

Legal:	Normal legal processes and procedures for Glasgow City Council will be followed in relation to developing practitioners' roles to support children, young people and carers in accordance with feedback about the service and continuous improvement of the service.

Economic Impact:	Providing children and young people with high quality care makes best use of resources, and helps to ensure positive long-term outcomes, thereby reducing future need for further specialist supports, including Adult Services.

Sustainability:	This work fully aligns with the Christie Commission report the principles of GIRFEC, the children's transformational change programme and the aspirations of 'The Promise,' which emphasise the need to deliver the right high-quality support at the right time to improve outcomes. Given that the key point of leverage to deliver the transformational change programme is to develop practice at the frontline – at the point of interaction with children, young people and their families and carers – the current workforce represents a considerable resource in terms of its contribution to achieving sustainable change across all supports and services to ensure best outcomes.

Sustainable Procurement and Article 19:	None.

Risk Implications:	Good support to foster carers and adopters ensures they feel valued. Should this not be provided there is a risk that foster carers will leave the service and either cease to foster or join private or third sector fostering agencies creating a financial risk to the service as well as a risk that care placements cannot be provide when needed. For adopters if support is not provided then this could lead to adoption breakdowns which would be detrimental to all concerned.

Implications for Glasgow City Council:	None.

Implications for NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde:	None.

1. Purpose

1.1. To inform the IJB Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee of the outcome of the inspection of Glasgow City HSCP's fostering and adoption services and the action plans created as a result of the inspections.

2. Inspection Process and Scope

2.1 The Care Inspectorate gave notice on 11th April 2023 of their intention to conduct an inspection of Glasgow City HSCP's fostering and adoption services. The inspection undertaken between 16th May and 15th June 2023, by three inspectors from the Care Inspectorate, assisted by some additional Care Inspectorate staff.

2.2 In preparation, the inspectors reviewed existing information which included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the previous inspection.

2.3 In advance, the fostering and adoption services uploaded evidence to Sharepoint folders, and issued questionnaires to staff, foster carers, adopters, children and young people.

2.4 While there are separate lead Inspectors and processes for each of the services, some provided evidence and inspection activity overlapped, for example in relation to permanence planning.

2.5 The inspection activity was largely conducted remotely, via Microsoft Teams, though the inspectors were available to meet in person with carers, adopters, children and young people.

2.6 The fostering inspectors consulted with 3 young people; 37 foster carers; 25 staff; 7 external professionals; 2 Agency Decision Makers; 3 Lay Panel members; 8 Team Leaders; 1 Head of Service and 1 locality Service Manager. In relation to adoption, the inspectors spoke to 3 adopted children; 14 adopters; 15 staff members; 2 external agencies; and 10 people at a focus group.

2.7 In addition, the Inspection Team held focus groups with staff, and observed online Fostering and Adoption Panels, which had a mixture of cases.

3. Scoring methodology and outcomes

3.1 Areas of inspection for both services focused on three Quality Indicators, using the Care Inspectorate scoring system of a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent.

3.2 Each Quality Indicators was scored on subheadings, and the Care Inspectorate system selects the lowest score across the subheadings as the overall score for that particular Quality Indicator.

Fostering Service

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	**3 - Adequate**
1.1 Children, young people. adults and their caregiver families experience compassion, dignity and respect	5 - Very Good
1.2 Children, young people and adults get the most out of life	4 - Good
1.3 Children, young people and adults' health and wellbeing benefits from the care and support they experience	5 - Very Good
1.4 Children, young people, adults and their caregiver families get the service that is right for them	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	**3 - Adequate**
2.2 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate
How well is our care and support planned?	**4 - Good**
5.1 Assessment and care planning reflects the outcomes and wishes of children, young people and adults	**4 - Good**

3.3 Key findings from the fostering inspection were that children and young people experienced supportive, enduring relationships with fostering families that provided them with a sense of belonging, and that children were supported to maintain meaningful relationships with extended family members, significant birth family members and were involved in the wider community.

3.4 Inspectors recognised that foster carers valued genuine trusting relationships, and that staff were skilled at supporting them. They noted that the service has committed carers and staff with knowledge and skill.

3.5 The inspection team found there was no consistent approach to matching children and young people's needs to the skills of the caregiver family, and they felt there was an inconsistent overview of key processes. They noted that robust quality assurance processes are required to improve consistency of practice.

3.6 In terms of care planning for children and young people in foster care, it was noted that some experienced delays in moving to their 'forever families', and inspectors noted that tracking of permanency and permanence panels should be improved to ensure consistency of experience and outcomes for all children and young people.

3.7 Inspectors were pleased that young people were able to remain with their foster families beyond the age of 18 years, however they highlighted that processes around this were unclear and not always followed, which resulted in the service operating beyond current registration at times.

Adoption Service

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	**3 – Adequate**
1.1 Children, young people. adults and their caregiver families experience compassion, dignity and respect	5 - Very Good
1.2 Children, young people and adults get the most out of life	5 - Very Good
1.3 Children, young people and adults' health and wellbeing benefits from the care and support they experience	4 - Good
1.4 Children, young people, adults and their caregiver families get the service that is right for them	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	**3 - Adequate**
2.2 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate
How well is our care and support planned?	**3 - Adequate**
5.1 Assessment and care planning reflects the outcomes and wishes of children, young people and adults	3 - Adequate

4. Key themes, recommendations and Requirements

4.1 Inspectors can specify requirements (which are mandatory) and can also highlight areas for recommended improvement. This was the case for both services and action plans have been created for each service in line with the requirements and recommendations made (See Appendix 1 for Fostering Action Plan and Appendix 2 for Adoption Action Plan).

4.2 The Care Inspectorate set a deadline for competition of requirements as 31st October 2023 but with a recognition that work would begin but not necessarily be completed within that time frame.

4.3 The fostering and adoption inspection reports were published on 27th July 2023.

4.4 In summary, the key messages from both inspections were:

- Both services support people's well being
- Children and young people and adults experience compassion, dignity and respect, and they are supported to get the most out of life
- The services promote learning and development across fostering and adoptive households
- Planning for children is complex and delayed, and we need to develop systems and supports to address this through recording/tracking.
- The service needs to establish governance systems to over see situations where young people remain in continuing care placements beyond 18

- Good practice around life story work, post-adoption support plans and therapeutic support needs to be available on a consistent basis
- Both services need to better evidence quality assurance processes and ensure that performance measures and systems are in place to monitor adherence to regulations

4.5 The service has made considerable progress towards completion of every requirement and recommendation and completed some of the requirements. The service is on course to complete all action for review of effectiveness in the summer months.

5. Recommendations

5.1 The IJB Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

a) note the fostering and adoption inspection findings; and
b) note the fostering and adoption action plans.

Appendix 1

FOSTERING INSPECTION REPORT 2023 – ACTION PLAN		
How well do we support people's wellbeing?		
REQUIREMENTS (3)		
REQUIREMENT	**PROGRESS AS AT JANUARY 2024**	**RESPONSIBLE**
1. By 31 October 2023, the provider must ensure that there is a clear identification of a fostering family's ability to meet the needs of a child before the child joins this family.	The Referral form used at the point of family placement request has been redrafted to ensure more detailed recording of children's care needs to enable better matching with available carers' strengths and vulnerabilities, and to identify any additional support required to ensure that those needs are fully met.	Cathy Coll SM Pauline McGrillen ASM David Curtis TL and the Placements Team Janet McCullough HoS
2. By 31 October 2023, the provider must ensure that all young people over the age of 18 years are being cared for by caregivers who are assessed and approved to do so.	Registration of as an Adult Placement service is underway Work is ongoing to devise the assessment format to assess and approve carers looking after this age group as adult placement carers. Service Manager is tracking completion of welfare assessments and pathways, plans and highlighting outstanding reports to locality colleagues to promote young people's right to welfare assessments. Plans are in place for an Adult Placement Panel, and ADM has been identified to approve and review Adult Placement carers. This will be activated upon completion of the Adult Placement Provider registration process.	Cathy Coll SM Pauline McGrillen ASM Janet McCullough HoS

3. By 31 October 2023, the provider must look to improve children's permanent futures.	There is ongoing recruitment of foster carers and adopters to widen placement choice. An initial tracking system has been created to help track assessment and care planning journeys for children who are looked after away from home. This system will be used to help identify drift and delay and support training and development. Two Social Workers from the service have been supported to be trained in Theraplay to be able to offer bespoke support to foster carers and adoptive families. A workshop on transitions is under development for Social Workers, foster carers and adopters.	Cathy Coll SM Pauline McGrillen ASM Locality LAAC Lead SMs: Julie Allen Lisa Leslie Mairead Fagan Janet McCullough HoS
AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT (2)		
REQUIREMENT	**PROGRESS AS AT JANUARY 2024**	**RESPONSIBLE**
1. To promote the safety and welfare of children and young people and their care giver families, the service should follow their complaints procedure when complaints are made by foster carers.	The service will continue to promote the complaints procedure to all staff and caregivers. Work is underway to establish access to GOLD for carers, and training on the complaints process will be devised and added to the platform. The Foster Carer Handbook is under review and will include guidance for carers on the complaints process. Information on Children's Rights is circulated to carers and all children and young people using the service shortly after the child or young person is placed with the family.	Cathy Coll SM Pauline McGrillen ASM Janet McCullough HoS

2. To keep children and young people safe the service should ensure that safer caring practices include unannounced visits within timescales and consistent regularly updated safer caring plans.	A Carefirst Report on the completion of unannounced visits has been devised and will be run quarterly to ensure unannounced visits take place within timescales. Safer caring plans will be reviewed at carer supervision sessions and Foster Carer Reviews reports are being revised to ensure this is also covered at FCR discussions.	Cathy Coll SM Pauline McGrillen ASM Janet McCullough HoS
HOW GOOD IS OUR LEADERSHIP?		
REQUIREMENTS (1)		
REQUIREMENT	**PROGRESS AS AT JANUARY 2024**	**RESPONSIBLE**
1. By 31 October 2023, the provider must ensure that robust quality assurance processes are in place to monitor key areas of performance within fostering regulations with monitoring and review to identify areas of continuous improvement.	A Carefirst report is being devised to highlight overdue FCRs and ensure presentation at Fostering Panel for first annual Review and every 3 years thereafter. This will be run quarterly. To ensure the safety of children and young people is improved through unannounced visits taking place within required timescales, a Carefirst report on the completion of unannounced visits will be run quarterly to ensure unannounced visits take place within required timescales. A tracking system will be established to ensure all statutory checks are monitored and kept up to date. To ensure incidents, accidents and allegations are robustly tracked and notified to the Care Inspectorate in line with the up-to-date guidance on notifications, the notifications log has been reviewed and amended to include the CI reference number for all notifications.	Cathy Coll SM Pauline McGrillen ASM Janet McCullough HoS

	Analysis of the tracking system already in place to track out with approval placements will be undertaken to consider themes, issues and any Panel review requirements for foster carers. A recording system for carer training attendance and no-attendance has been devised to track attendance and non-attendance at training and to support analysis of future needs. A complaints log will be established within the service (in addition to the log held by the Rights and Enquiries team) to aid service level oversight of complaints.	
AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT (2)		
REQUIREMENT	**PROGRESS AS AT JANUARY 2024**	**RESPONSIBLE**
1. The provider should ensure that the Agency Decision maker follows guidance and statutory timescales when reviewing and signing all panel documentation (Looked After Children's Scotland 2009 Regulations).	A performance report on completion and sign-off of Panel Minutes has been established and is provided to the ADM for discussion at quarterly meetings with the Service Manager and Panel Chairs.	Cathy Coll SM Pauline McGrillen ASM Janet McCullough HoS
2. The provider should ensure that all panel members are provided with regular appraisals which inform training needs.	The Panel Member appraisal form, to inform future training and learning opportunities for panel members, has been revised and will be launched at the Annual Panel Business meeting to be held on 27th February 2024. Appraisal Discussion dates will be set with Panel Chairs in the first instance following the launch. Learning and developments needs will be identified within appraisal discussions and training will be sought to address those needs.	Cathy Coll SM Janet McCullough HoS

HOW WELL IS OUR CARE AND SUPPORT PLANNED?		
REQUIREMENTS (0)		
REQUIREMENT	**PROGRESS AS AT JANUARY 2024**	**RESPONSIBLE**
None	N/A	
AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT (1)		
1. To keep children and young people safe the service should ensure that there are robust risk assessments practices and that risk assessments are in place for all children and young people and that these are regularly reviewed when circumstances change.	The Referral form used at the point of family placement request has been redrafted to ensure more detailed recording of children's care needs to enable better matching with available carers' strengths and vulnerabilities, and to identify any additional support required to ensure that those needs are fully met. A new Risk Assessment Form was launched at the Annual Safeguarding Day, held on 29th November 2023. All Supervising Social Workers and Team Leaders were given guidance on the use of the risk assessment. A New Placement Support Template was launched at the Annual Safeguarding Day, held on 29th November 2023. All Supervising Social Workers and Team Leaders were given guidance on the use of the Placement Support Template.	Cathy Coll SM Pauline McGrillen ASM FFC Team Leaders David Curtis TL and the Placements Team Janet McCullough HoS

ADOPTION INSPECTION REPORT 2023 – ACTION PLAN		
How well do we support people's wellbeing?		
REQUIREMENTS (1)		
REQUIREMENT	**PROGRESS AS AT JANUARY 2024**	**RESPONSIBLE**
1. By 31 October 2023, the provider must ensure that clear systems are in place to monitor outcomes for children in need of permanent substitute care.	An initial tracking system has been created to help track assessment and care planning journeys for children who are looked after away from home. This system will be used to help identify drift and delay and support training and development.	Joanne Bradley SM Elaine Goudie ASM Janet McCullough HoS
AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT (3)		
1. To promote children and young people's understanding of their history, the provider should improve consistency of life story practice.	Guidance on later life letters is under review along with a portfolio of exemplars which will support Social Workers in this area of work. There is two-day life story training program issued for 2023/2024 and this is open to all foster carers; Social Workers in Families for Children and localities; Children's residential staff, and adopters.	Joanne Bradley SM Elaine Goudie ASM Locality LAAC lead SMs: Mairead Fagan Lisa Leslie Julie Allen Janet McCullough HoS
2. To improve the support to adoptive families, the provider should ensure staff have the skills and knowledge to provide therapeutic interventions.	Two Social Workers from the service have been supported to be trained in Theraplay to be able to offer bespoke support to adoptive families. A review of service capacity is underway to ensure adoptive families are well prepared and supported throughout their adoption journey.	Joanne Bradley SM Elaine Goudie ASM Janet McCullough HoS

REQUIREMENT	PROGRESS AS AT JANUARY 2024	RESPONSIBLE
3. To ensure transitions for children are well managed, the provider should ensure that the approach is consistent and that foster carers and adopters are aware of best practice.	Transition training is already in place for adopters. A workshop for foster carers/ Social Workers is under development.	Joanne Bradley SM Elaine Goudie ASM Janet McCullough HoS
HOW GOOD IS OUR LEADERSHIP?		
REQUIREMENTS (1)		
REQUIREMENT	**PROGRESS AS AT JANUARY 2024**	**RESPONSIBLE**
1. By 31 October 2023, the provider must ensure that the role of panel in scrutinising evidence in cases where permanence may be required is strengthen and adheres to guidance on legislation. (Looked After Children's Scotland 2009 & Adoption 2007).	Independent Reviewing Officers chair My Meetings (LAAC reviews) for all children and young people who are newly looked after and accommodated. A tracking system helps monitor children's care plans. Planning for a Child's Future (revised LAAC training) is to be launched end of February/early March 2024 and will be mandatory for all staff. A revised permanence review report structure has been developed and is to be presented to Social Work Governance for authorisation to implement city wide.	Alison Cowper SM & IRO team Joanne Bradley SM Elaine Goudie ASM Janet McCullough HoS Alison Cowper SM & IRO team Alison Cowper & LAAC Lead SMs Mairead Fagan Lisa Leslie Julie Allen

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT (2)		
REQUIREMENT	**PROGRESS AS AT JANUARY 2024**	**RESPONSIBLE**
1. The provider should ensure that the Agency Decision maker follows guidance and statutory timescales when reviewing and signing all panel documentation (Looked After Children's Scotland 2009 Regulations).	A performance report on completion and sign-off of Panel Minutes has been established and is provided to the ADM for discussion at quarterly meetings with the Service Manager and Panel Chairs.	Joanne Bradley SM Elaine Goudie ASM Janet McCullough HoS
2. The provider should ensure that all panel members are provided with regular appraisals which inform training needs.	The Panel Member appraisal form, to inform future training and learning opportunities for panel members, has been revised and will be launched at the Annual Panel Business meeting to be held on 27th February 2024. Appraisal Discussion dates will be set with Panel Chairs in the first instance following the launch. Learning and developments needs will be identified within appraisal discussions and training will be sought to address those needs.	Joanne Bradley SM Janet McCullough HoS

HOW WELL IS OUR CARE AND SUPPORT PLANNED?		
REQUIREMENTS (1)		
REQUIREMENT	**PROGRESS AS AT JANUARY 2024**	**RESPONSIBLE**
1. By 31 October 2023, the provider must ensure that post adoption support plans are in place for all children.	There is regular communication with Glasgow adopters about the range and variety of adoption support that is available. This will include access to the new online learning platform (GOLD) that is being developed within Families for Children. The support is for adopters on a pre and post adoption basis. A revised post-petition meeting template has been agreed which has clear timescales as to when this meeting is to take place. The service has reviewed and agreed the adoption support plan format that will be used to assess and anticipate families support needs post adoption.	Joanne Bradley SM Elaine Goudie ASM Janet McCullough HoS
AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT (0)		
None.		