

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE – 18 SEPTEMBER 2018**

**REPORT ON DEVELOPMENT OF A KINSHIP CARE POLICY**

**REPORT BY MARK ARMSTRONG STRATEGIC DIRECTOR FOR PEOPLE**

**ABSTRACT**

Angus Council recognises the major contribution of kinship care as both a temporary and permanent placement option for children who cannot live with their parents. Children may be brought up by members of their extended families, friends or other people who are connected with them for a variety of reasons and in a range of different arrangements. These carers are often referred to as “kinship carers”.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 enhanced support available for kinship placements. This report seeks approval for the implementation of a new policy as to how we will support kinship carers to look after their children.

**1. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Note the enhanced support available to kinship carers in line with the requirements contained in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
- (i) Agree the implementation of the kinship care policy as detailed in Appendix 1 from October 2018.

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

This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement:

- 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

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1** Angus Council has had a Kinship Care scheme for looked after children since 2008. Committee Report 375/08. This offers support and financial assistance to children who are in this category as it has always been recognised that when children cannot reside with their birth parents due to risk of harm or neglect family options must be explored. Angus Council has been supporting children to live with their friends and families and have invested in two designated social workers to support kinship carers and children as a result of the developments and changes to legislation. On 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 COSLA and Scottish Government reached agreement to bring parity to kinship carers and foster carers. Para 3.3 of Report 3/16 refers. This was approved by committee and subsequently implemented. Since then we have seen an increase in the number of children placed with kinship carers over this time.

#### **4. CURRENT POSITION**

- 4.1** The kinship care scheme has been reviewed in light of changes in legislation as outlined by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and it is now necessary to consider the additional responsibilities in terms of kinship care assistance available to kinship carers. The 2014 act specifies the types of court order that will be recognised as a Kinship Care Order (KCO) for the purpose of receiving kinship care assistance and sets out the duties of local authorities to make arrangements to ensure that assistance is made available to kinship carers who are seeking, have obtained or are holders of a kinship care order and to children and young people who are subjects of such an Order.
- 4.2** All kinship applications are currently approved by Service Leader or kinship panel depending on the eligibility and the legal status of the child. Under the proposed scheme all kinship applications and reviews and kinship care eligibility assessments will be presented to the adoption and fostering panel which will now include kinship. This will ensure a consistent approach to kinship related matters.

#### **5. PROPOSALS**

- 5.1** It is proposed that committee endorse the Angus Council Kinship Care Policy and require implementation from 1 October 2018.

#### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1** The Council received additional funding from the Scottish Government to support the implementation and changes to kinship care legislation. This funding is sufficient to meet the additional costs to the Council of providing kinship care at present but this should be kept under review as more children and young people are now eligible for financial assistance.

**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: Angus Council Kinship Care Policy