

Meeting of South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership	Performance & Audit Committee
Held on:	24th April 2024
Agenda Item:	8
Title:	South Ayrshire's Approach to Kinship
Summary:	
<p>The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Performance and Audit Committee on South Ayrshire's approach to Kinship.</p>	
Author:	Elaine Mullin, Team Leader (Children and Families)
Recommendations:	
<p>It is recommended that the Performance & Audit Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Notes the content of the Kinship Overview Report, implementation of the Kinship Care Practice Guidance, progress since the formation of the Kinship Team and the strive for future developments associated with Kinship Care in South Ayrshire. 	
Route to meeting:	
<p>As discussed with the Head of Children's Health, Care and Justice Services.</p>	
Implications:	
Financial	<input type="checkbox"/>
HR	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equalities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>
ICT	<input type="checkbox"/>

SOUTH AYRSHIRE'S APPROACH TO KINSHIP

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Performance and Audit Committee on South Ayrshire's approach to Kinship.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Performance and Audit Committee

- i. Notes the content of the Kinship Overview Report, implementation of the Kinship Care Practice Guidance, progress since the formation of the Kinship Team and the strive for future developments associated with Kinship Care in South Ayrshire.**

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 An internal audit in relation to Kinship payments was undertaken in 2021. The audit highlighted that there were some weaknesses in terms of payments, scrutiny and accountability which resulted in a red report.
- 3.2 A short life working group was thereafter established to consider kinship care guidance and organisational objectives. A suite of paperwork to compliment the guidance, processes and assessments was compiled. The short life working group concluded in September 2021.
- 3.3 The Kinship Care Practice Guidance was presented at the Social Work Governance Board in February 2022, where it was accepted. Walkthroughs regarding the guidance and financial assessments were arranged, and all locality workers were invited to attend these arranged events.
- 3.4 As result of the audit findings and in recognition that the approach to kinship was not consistent across the partnership, a request for funding was made to establish a dedicated kinship team. Two kinship social workers were appointed in May 2022.
- 3.5 The kinship team was thus formed in May 2022 and comprises two kinship social workers, overseen by a Team Leader.
- 3.6 All Pentana actions in relation to the audit were completed and the audit actions concluded in December 2022.
- 3.7 Following its implementation and use the Kinship Care Practice Guidance was updated and presented at the Social Work Governance Board in August 2023. The updates were accepted.

4. REPORT

- 4.1 The report aims to provide an overview of the kinship team and highlight the significant recent changes to South Ayrshire's approach to kinship care.
- 4.2 The implementation of the Kinship Care Practice Guidance ensures compliance with legislation, regulations, policy, and guidance. It has also led to a better, and shared understanding of South Ayrshire's kinship processes across children and family's locality workers.
- 4.3 The approach has led to the more timeous completion of kinship assessments and kinship carer approvals, which has validated the kinship carers status, cemented the caring arrangement, and ensured that the finances in relation to approved kinship carers are in place.
- 4.4 In addition, annual financial assessments have been completed with the kinship carers. The financial assessments provide assurance that the payment of kinship allowances are accurate, whilst also offering kinship carers the opportunity to discuss any difficulties or issues they are facing and be provided with proportionate advice, support, and guidance.
- 4.5 South Ayrshire's client-based recording system, Carefirst has been utilised and developed, enabling the capture of good quality data and performance information around Kinship Care.
- 4.6 Since the formation of the kinship team kinship carers now have access to dedicated workers with specialist knowledge, who can offer personalised support when needed, through a relationship-based approach.
- 4.7 South Ayrshire's approved Kinship carers receive a quarterly newsletter which signposts to training, events and provides general information relating to kinship. Additionally, Information leaflets have been produced to support the understanding of prospective and approved kinship carers regarding the assessment and review process and in relation to kinship allowances.
- 4.8 The kinship team continue to strive to support kinship carers and are hoping to work in partnership with Thriving Communities to develop a different approach to kinship support groups. As such a proposition has been sent to Thriving Communities and it's expected that this will be presented at their Team Leaders meeting in early 2024.

5. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

- 5.1 Supporting South Ayrshire's approved kinship carers is vital to delivering our strategic objectives. Support to kinship carers was one of the objectives highlighted with the IJB Strategic Plan 2021 – 2031, with the action being to enhance support to our kinship carers. Improving outcomes for kinship carers and the children and young people for whom they care, ensures they live well, grow well and age well.

- 5.2 South Ayrshire’s Children and Young People Service Plan 2023-2026 makes reference to supporting wellbeing through whole family approaches, thus kinships aligns with the service plans’ priorities.
- 5.3 The approach also reflects the IJB strategic commitment to changing the balance of care, where we have committed to “Keep South Ayrshire’s Children in South Ayrshire and within families or family-type support wherever possible”. Support to kinship carers also aligns with South Ayrshire’s Parenting Promise 2021 – 2031.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial Implications

- 6.1.1 There are no financial implications to agreeing this report.

6.2 Human Resource Implications

- 6.2.1 There are no HR implications to agreeing this report.

6.3 Legal Implications

- 6.3.1 There are no legal implications to agreeing this report.

6.4 Equalities implications

- 6.4.1 There are no equality implications arising from the content and recommendations of the report.

6.5 Sustainability implications

- 6.5.1 There are no environmental sustainability implications arising from the contents and recommendations of the report.

6.6 Clinical/professional assessment

- 6.6.1 The views of partnership colleagues have been taken into consideration.

7. CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

- 7.1 The report was compiled with input from the kinship team members and was presented at the Senior/Service Managers meeting in January 2024.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 8.1. There are no risks associated with the noting of this report.

REPORT AUTHOR AND PERSON TO CONTACT

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Kinship Overview Report (available as separate document)
Appendix 2 – Kinship Guidance (available as separate document)

Date of Report: 9th April 2024