

NOMINATION DETAILS

Who is being nominated?

Individual

Please provide the name of the person being nominated:

Amy McKellar

Job title:

Adoption Team Lead

Organisation:

Inverclyde HSCP

AWARD DETAILS

Which category are you entering?

Category 7: Thought Leadership

Please confirm that the work carried out relates to the last two years (up to January 2018):

Yes

Q1. Overview: (max 200 words)

Amy Mundy Team Lead has demonstrated innovative leadership in respect of adoption and permanence services. The Adoption & Children (Scotland) Act 2007 highlights the local authority's role and responsibilities in supporting birth families affected by adoption and of what they can expect from adoption services. Amy identified gaps in Inverclyde HSCPs service which resulted in the realignment of the Family Placement Services and the creation of the "Birth Ties" project in spring 2016. Birth parents told us that they found it hard to understand the different processes involved in adoption. They also said that it was difficult when they shared the same social worker as their child. At the time it was normal practice in Inverclyde for the child's social worker to be progressing the permanence/adoption plan while trying to support the birth parents. Amy was instrumental in raising awareness of the competing demands and emotional investment in doing both these roles. This was a catalyst for doing things differently.

SSSA Entry Form 2018 :

Q2. What did you do? (max 500 words)

Amy was instrumental in developing an integrated family placement strategy which contributes to the highest levels of quality care for children who require to be looked after away from home.

We looked at the evidence for change which included:

- Birth parents feedback about the complexities of the permanence process
- Research evidence relating to the emotional impact of adoption on birth parents (feelings of loss, shame, humiliation, betrayal, anger, guilt and failure for birth family members).
- The challenging backgrounds of birth parents can also compromise their capacity to understand and cope with the loss and birth parents often need support in their own right (Neill, 2006)
- Evidence locally about the timeline of permanence and the potential drift within the process
- The impact of timeline drift on outcomes for children

Amy was instrumental in communicating and leading on the changes put in place within Inverclyde HSCP to counteract these issues. Inverclyde HSCPs family placement strategy has achieved significant improvements in adoption services with modest investment.

We have:

- made best use of technology in the recruitment of prospective adopters in order to make the process more efficient and effective
- reduced the timescales of a child's pathway to permanence
- Developed the Birth Ties Project including an automatic referral process when the decision is made to pursue a permanence plan. A pathway that supports birth parents and other family members navigate the process. We have created information leaflets and collaborated with likely referrers to tell them about the service.
- Consulted with The Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELSIS) to help us with evaluating the service

Awareness of Birth Ties Support Project has been raised within Inverclyde. Amy was a joint winner in the 2017 Integrated Greater Glasgow and Clyde staff awards for "outstanding leadership in developing the service in order to improve outcomes for children and birth families".

There has been national interest in the project and presentations have been given at:

- The Centre for Excellence for Looked After children in Scotland (CELSIS) 'Practice Exchange Workshop: best practice in contemporary adoption work'
- The Adoption and Fostering Alliance (Scotland) Health Conference 2017

Another local authority has approached the project to request information as they are interested in developing a similar model in their area.

SSSA Entry Form 2018 :

Q3. What did you achieve? (max 500 words)

Amy was instrumental in developing an integrated family placement strategy which contributes to the highest levels of quality care for children who require to be looked after away from home.

We looked at the evidence for change which included:

- Birth parents feedback about the complexities of the permanence process
- Research evidence relating to the emotional impact of adoption on birth parents (feelings of loss, shame, humiliation, betrayal, anger, guilt and failure for birth family members).
- The challenging backgrounds of birth parents can also compromise their capacity to understand and cope with the loss and birth parents often need support in their own right (Neill, 2006)
- Evidence locally about the timeline of permanence and the potential drift within the process
- The impact of timeline drift on outcomes for children

Amy was instrumental in communicating and leading on the changes put in place within Inverclyde HSCP to counteract these issues. Inverclyde HSCP's family placement strategy has achieved significant improvements in adoption services with modest investment.

We have:

- made best use of technology in the recruitment of prospective adopters in order to make the process more efficient and effective
- reduced the timescales of a child's pathway to permanence
- Developed the Birth Ties Project including an automatic referral process when the decision is made to pursue a permanence plan. A pathway that supports birth parents and other family members navigate the process. We have created information leaflets and collaborated with likely referrers to tell them about the service.
- Consulted with The Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELSIS) to help us with evaluating the service

Awareness of Birth Ties Support Project has been raised within Inverclyde. Amy was a joint winner in the 2017 Integrated Greater Glasgow and Clyde staff awards for "outstanding leadership in developing the service in order to improve outcomes for children and birth families".

There has been national interest in the project and presentations have been given at:

- The Centre for Excellence for Looked After children in Scotland (CELSIS) 'Practice Exchange Workshop: best practice in contemporary adoption work'
- The Adoption and Fostering Alliance (Scotland) Health Conference 2017

Another local authority has approached the project to request information as they are interested in developing a similar model in their area.

Q4. Why should you receive an award? (max 100 words)

Amy's contribution has strengthened the agenda and outcomes of Inverclyde's most vulnerable children. Adoption related timescales have been significantly reduced. Birth parents views are better represented within decision making forums and the process is easier to navigate. In addition birth parents are supported in creating lasting memories for their children facilitating a sense of coherence for children who are adopted. Amy is sharing these important outcomes through conferences, reaching out to partner agencies and working with CELSIS to evaluate the development. The award will be an opportunity to celebrate the impacts and share it widely.

•

•

•

•