



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## ADOPTION SUPPORT AGENCIES

### **An Independent Social Work/Play Therapy Service**

**PO Box 327  
Weybridge  
Surrey  
KT13 9TW**

*Lead Inspector*  
**Linda Plummer**

*Announced Inspection*  
**29th March 2007 10:00 am**



The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this service are those for *Adoption Support Agencies*. They can be found at [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk) or obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: [www.tso.co.uk/bookshop](http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop)

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# SERVICE INFORMATION

<b>Name of service</b>	An Independent Social Work/Play Therapy Service
<b>Address</b>	PO Box 327 Weybridge Surrey KT13 9TW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01932 829587
<b>Fax number</b>	01932 820100
<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Provider Web address</b>	
<b>Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)</b>	Carol Ann Platteuw
<b>Name of registered manager (if applicable)</b>	
<b>Type of registration</b>	Adoption Support Agency

# SERVICE INFORMATION

## Conditions of registration:

1. To provide services to adults and children.

**Date of last inspection** N/A This is the first inspection of this service following registration

## Brief Description of the Service:

Ms Platteuw is a registered individual offering therapeutic play sessions to adopted children and consultations to adoptive parents through a contract with a Local Authority and through other routes, which may be publicly funded, eg ordered by a Court, or privately commissioned.

The service was registered as an Adoption Support Agency in June 2006

# SUMMARY

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

This was an announced inspection, which took place on 29 March 2007. The sole provider was interviewed, the business premises seen, various documents read, including case records, and 3 sets of service users (plus an involved professional) interviewed by telephone.

Questionnaires were sent to referring agencies (2 sent & returned), young people (2 sent & returned) and parents (7 sent & 3 returned).

Feedback forms used in the Local Authority contract were also seen.

## **What the service does well:**

A range of play therapy services are offered, which are tailored to the particular families' needs as detailed in the Statement of Purpose.

Services are offered in a safe context as detailed in the safeguarding policy.

Services are focused and service users fully involved in the initial written contract, reviews and final reviews.

'The therapist was sensitive, responsive and treated us all as individuals' (work with child and parent)

Feedback forms are sent to ascertain service user's views at the end of each piece of work. These can be used to inform future practice.

Services are delivered in a professional and competent manner and can be included in an adoption support package.

'Carol is always available and willing to discuss aspects of the work she is carrying out and information is shared on a regular basis' (referring agency).

Ms Platteuw is a qualified social worker and play therapist with many years experience as a social worker, Guardian ad Litem and therapist.

She has demonstrable and validated skills and expertise as shown by her qualifications, experience and evaluations from service users and referring social workers.

'Carol is an excellent therapist who enjoys a very warm, productive relationship with my son' (adopter)

A high level of professional practice is maintained by regular supervision, training and membership of professional bodies.

Service users have access to the complaints procedure of both the relevant Local Authority and the British Association of Play Therapists.

Records are securely retained and the office premises provide a pleasant and safe setting for the services offered.

Charges for the service are provided and estimates prepared when requested.

The service is financially viable and conforms to regulations in relation to tax, national insurance and VAT.

The service offers a high standard of work as evidenced by the continuing high demand for the service from Local Authorities and solicitors.

## **What has improved since the last inspection?**

This was the first Inspection following registration

## **What they could do better:**

(Ms Platteuw has herself identified all of the following in her plans for improvement as outlined in the self-assessment document completed for this inspection)

Develop a Disaster Recovery Plan and a Health and Safety Policy proportionate to the size of the service.

Explore processes for records back-up.

Seek advice concerning the length of time for which files have to be retained.

Display the Registration Certificate as an Adoption Support Agency within the premises.

Further enhance and extend the already high level of 'welcoming diversity' materials used with children.

Inform Independent Reviewing Officer as appropriate should a child's need for therapy be compromised by a lack of finance from the responsible Local Authority.

Extend the evaluation system to include referrers and children.

Include information about making a complaint in the individual contracts with service users.

Ensure the agency obtains the current Safeguarding Children policy and correct information regarding responding to allegations of historical abuse from the relevant referring Local Authority.

Undertake further training to keep updated in relation to adoption law, policy and procedures and obtain the current edition of BAAF's 'Adoption Now' guide.



Please contact the provider for advice of actions taken in response to this inspection.

The report of this inspection is available from [enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk) or by contacting your local CSCI office. The summary of this inspection report can be made available in other formats on request.

# DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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# Statement Of Purpose

**The intended outcome for Standard 1 is:**

There is a clear written statement of the aims and objectives of the adoption support agency and the agency ensures that it meets those aims and objectives

1 Statement of purpose

## **JUDGEMENT**

Quality in this outcome area is **good** with the Statement of Purpose being a clearly-written document containing the required information, enabling service users and referring agencies to readily understand the scope of the service offered

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The Statement of Purpose, reviewed and updated in March 2007, clearly sets out the aims, objectives, structure and method of service delivery for the agency.

The details of the Registration Authority need to be added.

Ms Platteuw uses the Children's Guide to Play Therapy produced by the British Association of Play Therapists and also draws up an individual contract with older children.

Specific reference to the complaints process and how to access the Children's Rights Director need to be incorporated.

# Safeguarding And Promoting Welfare

**The intended outcome for Standard 2 is:**

The adoption support agency safeguards and promotes the physical, mental and emotional welfare of people affected by adoption who wish to use its services.

## 2 Safeguarding and promoting welfare

### **JUDGEMENT**

Quality in this outcome area is **excellent**.

Ms Platteuw demonstrates a clear understanding of the issues involved and has appropriate written policies. Individual contracts are agreed with service users.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

### **EVIDENCE:**

Ms Platteuw has drawn up a Safeguarding Children Policy for her own agency and also abides by the requirements of the Local Authority with whom she has a Service Level Agreement.

She ensures that she has a named contact in any Local Authority with whom she may be working and also details of the Out of Hours service.

Children, parents and professional with whom she may work are all informed of her duty to report any concerns of a child protection nature.

She has appropriately recorded and reported an allegation made by a child receiving therapy.

Ms Platteuw has received training in child protection and has worked as a child protection social worker.

Specific reference to responding to allegations of historical abuse will be added to the agency's safeguarding policy.

# User Focused Services

## The intended outcome for Standard 3 is:

People affected by adoption receive a service from the adoption support agency that is appropriate and tailored to their particular need. They are treated fairly, openly and with respect throughout their contact with the agency.

### 3 User-focused services

## JUDGEMENT

Quality in this outcome area is **excellent** with a clear emphasis on the needs of the child, an appreciation of the issues that may arise from 'difference' and a clear process established for delivering and reviewing the service, which involves the service user.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

## EVIDENCE:

The service provided is aimed at helping individual children who may have emotional and attachment difficulties through the provision of play therapy sessions.

The work may involve behaviour management advice for parents to further enhance the parent-child relationship

Ms Platteuw abides by the British Association of Play Therapists' Equal Opportunities Policy.

When working with a family of a different ethnicity, religion or culture to her own, she will acknowledge that difference and explore with them their beliefs.

An example was given of the importance of understanding a bereavement in the context of the family's religious beliefs and what a child would be told.

She has worked with a mixed race child who was placed for adoption with a White father and a Black mother. The child's birth mother had been White and

her birth father Black. These facts were important for her and needed to be acknowledged and explored.

Ms Platteuw has worked with children with Learning Difficulties and been aware of the need to offer more simple explanations around difficult events.

She provided support and advice to same sex parents who have adopted a child. It was important to hear their concerns about not being accepted within the usual support networks that other new adoptive parents can access.

Within the play therapy room Ms Platteuw has play materials that reflect different ethnicities; Black dolls, books with characters of various ethnicities and races, various masks.

An initial meeting is held with parents, a social history is taken and a comprehensive account of their concerns in relation to their children is compiled. A written contract is drawn up which details the work that will be offered and treatment objectives.

A written contract is used for older children.

The work is reviewed after an agreed number of sessions. The service users (the parents and the child – dependent on the age of the child) will be part of that review.

A final review is held at the end of the work, which parents and the child attend.

Reports are written for each review and at the end of the work. Service users' views are included in these reports.

Feedback forms are sent to service users at the conclusion of the work.

Comments are noted and acted upon.

Ms Platteuw intends to further develop ways of obtaining children's views on the service and to introduce a feedback form for referrers.

Information about making a complaint is currently provided through separate leaflets. Ms Platteuw intends to also include reference to the process in her written contracts with individuals.

# Service Delivery

## The intended outcome for Standard 4 is:

The adoption support agency's service users receive a good-quality, professional service, based on their needs identified by an assessment.

### 4 Service delivery

## JUDGEMENT

Quality in this outcome area is **excellent**, the service being delivered by a sensitive and committed therapist who is skilled at assessing children's (and adults) needs and promoting positive outcomes

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

## EVIDENCE:

A written contract is drawn up with the parent/service user to ensure the service is tailored to their need.

Play therapy sessions are offered in six batches after which there is a review with the parent, child and referrer.

Play therapy can be provided as part of an adoption support package

'When working within the Hertfordshire Adoption Support Team my play therapy services are specified within the written post adoption support packages provided to families.' (self-assessment)

If an identified need within an adoptive family becomes clear a referral can be made to other services.

Ms Platteuw has facilitated referrals for adults when it became clear they had their own therapeutic needs and would benefit from counselling in their own right.

Ms Platteuw has highlighted a need for child, with whom she was working, to have a Statement of Special Educational Needs and then supported the parent at a meeting with the school to discuss this issue.

Positive comments have been received in feedback forms from service users.

'The service is ... the only thing that keeps us sane!' (adopters)

Reports produced within Court proceedings are scrutinised by the Court and legal professionals. A Guardian ad Litem interviewed by the Inspector commented that Ms Platteuw is 'very highly regarded' by instructing solicitors.

# Fitness To Provide Or Manage An Adoption Support Agency

The intended outcomes for Standards 5 and 6 are:

The adoption support agency is provided and managed by those who are suitable and have the appropriate skills and experience to do so effectively and efficiently to provide the services specified in the Statement of purpose

- 5 Skills to provide or manage
- 6 Suitability to carry on or manage

**JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

Quality in this outcome area is **excellent**. The individual provider is experienced and skilled in working with children and has many years evidence of effectively managing her own business

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Ms Platteuw has the following Professional qualifications:

B A (Hons) Social Science obtained in 1980  
Certificate of Qualification in Social Work obtained in 1980  
Group work training obtained in 1984  
Certificate of Family and Marital Therapy obtained in 1992  
Diploma in Child Protection obtained in 1995  
Post Graduate Diploma in Play Therapy obtained in 2002

She is a member of the following professional organisations:

British Association of Social Workers  
British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering  
British Association for the Study and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect  
National Association of Guardians ad Litem and Reporting Officers  
The Who Cares? Trust  
British Association of Play Therapists



She is registered with the following professional bodies:  
General Social Care Council Registration no. 1020286  
Commission for Social Care Inspection as an Adoption Support Agency Service  
Number 0000066883

She has the following relevant experience:

Local Authority Social Worker in Inner London in Child Protection Teams.

Extensive experience of all statutory child care work.

Social Worker in Fostering and Adoption Team

Adoption experience in recruitment of carers and leading preparation courses/programmes for prospective carers. Assessment of prospective foster carers and adopters. Family finding for individual children and sibling groups.

Individual work with adopted children.

Guardian ad Litem for fifteen years on the Inner and North London Panel and South London Panel undertaking detailed risk assessment of children's situations.

Reports prepared for Family Proceedings Courts, County Courts and High Courts.

Work undertaken in a range of proceedings including care proceedings, secure accommodation applications, proceedings regarding contact and adoption.

Play therapy work for the last 5 years.

Ms Platteuw has worked on a self employed basis since 1984 and has operated on a sound financial basis during that time, having the systems in operation to ensure good financial and administrative practice.

She contributes financially to half the running costs of an office.

She employs an accountant to ensure her yearly accounts are in order and produced to the relevant standard for tax and VAT purposes.

She has an enhanced CRB check every 3 years, the current check being dated 26 February 2006.

# Management Of The Adoption Support Agency

**The intended outcomes for Standards 7 and 8 are:**

The adoption support agency safeguards and promotes the physical, mental and emotional welfare of people affected by adoption who wish to use its services.

- 7 Managing effectively and efficiently
- 8 Monitoring and controlling

**JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

Quality in this outcome area is **good** with systems for monitoring and controlling service delivery and for maintaining business accounts.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Standard 7 is not applicable as the registered provider is an individual.

Charges are provided to purchasers of services and written estimates provided when requested.

End of year accounts are available and indicate that the service is financially secure.

The service is reviewed annually by Hertfordshire.

Ms Platteuw sends out feedback forms to evaluate the service.

She ensures the conditions of registration are met. Registration with the GSCC is valid until January 2008; membership of the British association of Play therapists was renewed in September 2006, all the relevant conditions having been met.

Ms Platteuw will use her professional supervision to discuss work demands and to ensure that commitments, entered into, are kept.

She has consistently met deadlines for submitting reports eg to Court

The expectation of a 6-monthly service report needs to be developed.

# Employment And Management Of Staff And Volunteers

**The intended outcomes for Standards 9 to 14 are:**

The staff and volunteers who work in the adoption support agency are suitable to work with the agency's service users and they are managed, trained and supported in such a way as to ensure the best possible outcomes for service users. The number of staff and volunteers and their range of qualifications and experience are sufficient to achieve the purposes and functions of the adoptions support agency.

- 9 Suitability to work with service users
- 10 Organisation and management of staff
- 11 Sufficient staff with the right skills and experience
- 12 Fair and competent employer
- 13 Training
- 14 Accountability and support

(These standards 9-14 do not apply where the registered provider is an individual and does not have staff or volunteers)

**JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

Quality in this outcome area is **(excellent, good, adequate or poor)**

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

## **EVIDENCE:**

These standards do not apply as the registered provider is an individual who does not employ staff or use volunteers

# Individual Practitioners

## The intended outcome for Standard 15 is:

The registered provider manages the agency effectively and efficiently and is suitable to work with the agency's service users. He or she is trained and supported in such a way as to ensure the best possible outcomes for service users.

### 15 Managing effectively and efficiently

(This standard only applies where the registered provider is an individual and does not have staff or volunteers)

## JUDGEMENT

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

Ms Platteuw has appropriate training and skills, which she maintains through professional support, practice experience and relevant reading and training.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

## EVIDENCE:

Ms Platteuw provides a service in accordance with the Statement of Purpose.

She has supervision with a supervisor approved by the British Association of Play Therapy each month.

She attends training eg March 2007 - 2 day workshop on Helping Children with Trauma; June 2007 - 5 day International Conference on Play Therapy, and meets the requirements for continuing professional development of the General Social Care Council and the British Association of Play Therapists, eg GSCC registration no. 1020286 valid until January 2008.

She keeps up to date with adoption-related issues through membership of organisations such as the British Association for Adoption and Fostering.

Her work is guided by the British Association of Play Therapists' Equal Opportunities Policy.

The business has public liability and professional indemnity insurance to cover claims up to £5 million (current policy valid until 29 February 2008).

Ms Platteuw rents office premises, which are appropriately equipped and also provide a play room in which to see children.

Telephone messages and e-mails are responded to within 2 days.

Ms Platteuw intends to produce a Health & Safety Policy for the office premises, which will be drawn to the attention of those attending for services.

# Complaints And Representations

**The intended outcome for Standard 16 is:**

Complaints and representations are resolved quickly and handled in a sensitive, thorough and non-biased manner.

16 Complaints and representations

## **JUDGEMENT**

Quality in this outcome area is **good** with appropriate information being provided to service users and a recording system in place.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Ms Platteuw uses the Play Therapists' Association complaints procedure and makes the explanatory leaflet available to all her service users. She has also attended a day's training on this issue through the Play Therapists' Association.

She intends to also include a reference to making a complaint in her individual work contracts.

Service users referred by the Local Authority also have access to that organisation's complaints procedure.

A complaints file is maintained but no complaints have ever been made concerning Ms Platteuw's service provision.

# Records

## The intended outcomes for Standards 17 to 21 are:

All appropriate records are securely maintained, retained and are accessible when required.

- 17 Records with respect to services
- 18 Adoption case records
- 19 Access to adoption case records
- 20 Administrative records
- 21 Personnel files for members of staff and volunteers

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

Quality in this outcome area is **good** with appropriate systems in place to ensure records are well-maintained and secure.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

## EVIDENCE:

Case records for the LA contract were not seen as these are held by the Local Authority (LA)

Records of the play therapy sessions are hand written but reviews and reports for official use are typed.

Court reports and information provided by other parties are kept in files in different sections. Case summaries are provided at the front of each file. Contact details are also at the front of each file.

When a case is closed the file is simplified. Documents that can be found at other sources, such as the LA, are shredded. The simplified file is retained.

Records are kept in lockable cupboards in a lockable room.

Access to the office suite is restricted to the employees of the business\* which shares the premises, the secretary for the British Association of Play Therapists and visitors by invitation and when Ms Platteuw is present.

\* Run by Ms Platteuw's partner and all CRB-checked.

Ms Platteuw needs to develop a written case recording policy to cover file maintenance, secure storage, protection from damage and file retention.

Standard 18, 19 N/A

Ms Platteuw is registered as a sole provider of adoption support services and is the only employee.

She maintains a Registration File containing the legislative documentation underpinning her service. This might also usefully hold a copy of the Contract with Hertfordshire, her Curriculum Vitae and her Statement of Purpose, thereby serving the purpose of a Personnel File.



## Fitness Of Premises

**The intended outcome for Standard 22 is:**

The premises used by the adoption support agency are suitable for the purpose of providing the services as set out in the agency's statement of purpose.

22 Fitness of premises

### **JUDGEMENT**

Quality in this outcome area is **good**

Ms Platteuw has a comfortable well equipped room in which to offer play therapy within a pleasant, well furnished and bright small suite of offices in a complex created in a mews conversion.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

### **EVIDENCE:**

Security is good at Ms Platteuw's own office premises – there is gated entry to the mews and access has to be granted from inside the premises to visitors. These premises are used for office work, supervision (received and provided) and play therapy sessions.

Ms Platteuw states that the premises and contents are insured, and there is a burglar alarm, fire alarm and fire extinguishers.

Otherwise, Ms Platteuw uses foster homes, schools or premises provided by the Local Authority for therapy. These venues could all be utilised should the office premises become unavailable for any reason.

Ms Platteuw will look into developing an appropriate back-up system for electronic records and a Disaster Recovery Plan proportionate to the size of the business.

# Financial Requirements

**The intended outcomes for Standards 23 and 24 are:**

The adoption support agency is financially viable

- 23 Financial viability
- 24 Financial processes

**JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

Ms Platteuw has been self-employed for 23 years and has maintained financial viability. She produces annual accounts and provides written details of her fees and estimates for particular pieces of work.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The services accounts are maintained and professionally produced by accountants.

The service's financial viability and the procedures taken to conform to the various regulations and guidelines are set out in the end of year accounts. The current service has been in existence for seven years and Ms Platteuw reports that she must pass work on to colleagues, as she cannot meet the demand alone.

Ms Platteuw is considering expanding the service by recruiting a core group of therapists to offer play therapy to adopted children, having identified this as a real need.

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Adoption have been met and uses the following scale.

**4** Standard Exceeded (Commendable)      **3** Standard Met (No Shortfalls)  
**2** Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls)      **1** Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

"X" in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion

"N/A" in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	3

SAFEGUARDING AND PROMOTING WELFARE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
2	3

USER FOCUSED SERVICES	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
3	3

SERVICE DELIVERY	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
4	3

FITNESS TO PROVIDE OR MANAGE AN ADOPTION SUPPORT AGENCY	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
5	3
6	3

MANAGEMENT OF THE ADOPTION SUPPORT AGENCY	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
7	N/A
8	3

EMPLOYMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
9	N/A
10	N/A
11	N/A
12	N/A
13	N/A
14	N/A

INDIVIDUAL PRACTITIONERS	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
15	3

COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATIONS	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
16	3

RECORDS	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
17	3
18	N/A
19	N/A
20	3
21	N/A

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

## Continued

FITNESS OF PREMISES	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
22	3

FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
23	3
24	3

Are there any outstanding requirements from the last inspection?

N/A – first inspection

## STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Adoption support regulations and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

No.	Standard	Regulation	Requirement	Timescale for action
1	ADS1	Schedule 1 Adoption Support Agencies (England) & Adoption Agencies (Misc Amendments) Regs 2005	Statement of Purpose to contain details of the Registration Authority	30/06/07
2	ADS1	Reg 5 as above	Children's Guide to contain information on making a complaint and on how to access the Children's Rights Director	30/06/07

## RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations relate to National Minimum Standards and are seen as good practice for the Registered Provider/s to consider carrying out.

No.	Refer to Standard	Good Practice Recommendations
1	ADS16 ADS3	To include reference to the complaints process in the individual written contracts with service users
2	ADS2	To introduce feedback form for referrers and for children

3	ADS8	Produce a 6-monthly report on service delivery to aid in monitoring progress
4	ADS15	Produce a Health and Safety Policy for the office premises, to be drawn to the attention of visitors.
5	ADS17 ADS1	Develop a written policy on case recording, file retention, and safe file storage
6	ADS22	Develop a Disaster Recovery Plan proportionate to the size of the business

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