

Adoption Support

Inspection report for adoption support agency

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Inspector	Marian Denny
Type of inspection	Key
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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Not judged: this aspect of the provision was not judged

Service Information

Brief description of the service

Mrs Kirk was registered as an adoption support agency in April 2009. She is the sole clinician and does not employ staff or contract services.

The agency provides advice; counselling and support services to adopters, as well as therapeutic services to children placed for adoption and adopted children. It provides assistance to the adoptive child and adopting parent in supporting the continuance of their relationships. It specialises in providing clinical expertise in the application of attachment theory principles and therapy with looked after and adopted children. Support and mediation is provided, where an adoptive placement is in danger of disruption or has disrupted. The agency undertakes direct work with children, their parents or carers and the wider organisations of supporting professionals. Training and consultation is offered in this area of work.

Summary

The overall quality rating is Good

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

This is the first time this agency has been inspected against the National Minimum Standards (NMS) and the Adoption Support Agencies (ASA) Regulations. It was an announced inspection and 15 of the ASA (NMS), which were relevant to this agency, were assessed. Two of these standards were judged as being outstanding and thirteen were judged as good. The agency provides a good quality adoption support service. Its practice is extremely child and service user focussed and good outcomes are achieved for those using the services.

What the service does well

There are clearly written policies and procedures, which serve to support and promote good agency practice. There is a clear referral process and an effective system in place to respond promptly to a request for services. The agency provides good information about their services. Those using the service are welcomed to the agency without prejudice. The agency is committed to ensuring that the welfare of service users and others, who have been affected by the adoption, are effectively safeguarded and promoted. All work carried out is closely scrutinised both internally and externally. The registered person is an exceptionally well qualified, experienced and skilled therapist. The agency is well managed and there are clear systems in place to monitor and control its activities. A holistic approach is adopted in relation to the agency's work, which results in a good, thoughtfully and sensitively delivered services being provided to families, children and young people, with good outcomes achieved,

What has been improved since the last inspection

This section is not applicable, as this is the first inspection of the agency.

What they could do better

The safeguarding policy does not contain all the information specified in the adoption support national minimum standards.

What sort of service is it?

Statement of purpose

The provision is good.

The agency has a clearly written Statement of Purpose (SOP), which accurately describes the services provided. It also has a child friendly children's guide. These documents contain all the information required under the Adoption Support Agencies (England) (NMS) and the Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations, 2005.

Safeguarding and promoting welfare

The provision is good.

The agency is extremely mindful of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of service users, as well as others whose lives are affected by the provision of its services. The agency has a safeguarding policy and procedure, however, it does not contain all the information required under the Adoption Support Agencies' national minimum standards, for example, it does not address allegations relating to historical abuse. The provider is fully conversant with this policy and procedures and keeps herself fully informed of safeguarding issues and changes of practice.

User focused services

The provision is outstanding.

The agency ensures all adoptive families receive information about the services provided. This information can be produced in a variety of forms to meet the differing needs of those using the service. Requests for a service are responded to extremely promptly. The welfare and safety of the child and their family is carefully considered in deciding whether they are able to provide a service. When the agency is unable to meet the needs of those referred, the referring agency is advised. The agency greatly values and respects those using their services and this is reflected in the agency's written policies and procedures. The agency ensures thorough assessments are undertaken and carefully listens to adoptive families and children's, wishes and feelings regarding the service they require. A flexible, responsive service is provided to adoptive families and children, with the utmost of care taken, to ensure they receive the very best possible service.

The agency services are commissioned by several local authorities and these are supported by a written agreement, which is regularly reviewed. Those using the agency's services are informed of their right to make representations and complaints and are helped to do so, if this is required. The agency is committed to equality in practice, and works hard to ensure that all service users and contacts are treated equitably regardless of race, religion, gender, sexuality or disability.

Service delivery

The provision is outstanding.

The agency has written policies and procedures, which accurately reflect and support the services provided. There is a clear procedure to determine whether a service should be offered. Any work undertaken is informed from assessments obtained regarding the needs of those using the service. All services are tailored to meet the adoptive family and child's needs, which are thoughtfully and sensitively delivered. There are robust quality assurance systems in place, which effectively scrutinises the agency's work and ensures good outcomes are achieved for those using its services.

Information obtained from adoptive families confirms that the agency provides a clear explanation of the service provided, fully consults with them and they are actively involved in any decisions, which affects their lives. The majority of those using the service stated that 'it is an extremely, professional service and delivered to a very high standard'. A number indicated that they 'understood their child better' and several stated, 'that without the agency's support they would not have survived'. Others said 'I can not thank her sufficiently for all that she's done'. Indeed, the overwhelming view of all those using the agency is that 'it is an excellent, professional service' and those using the service have an extremely high regard for the agency.

Fitness to provide or manage an adoption support agency

The provision is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Equality and diversity are an integral part of the agency's philosophy and this is quite clearly reflected in all aspects of the services provided. The agency's policies and procedures also underpin this practice, as does regular training on equality and diversity is and the providers' code of practice, which the agency provider is required to follow in order to be maintain her professional registration.

The adoption support agency was registered in April 2009. The inspection confirms that the registered person is well qualified, has a high level of knowledge, considerable professional experience and skills and is wholly suitable to effectively manage an adoption support agency.

Management of the adoption support agency

The provision is good.

The registered provider has a clear understanding of how the agency should be managed. The processes used are transparent, easily understood and clearly aimed at providing a good quality service. External consultants provide clinical supervision of the practitioner's work and ensure that the psychological service provided is of a good quality. The agency is well managed and good outcomes are obtained for those using the service.

Employment and management of staff and volunteers

The provision was not judged.

The registered provider of this agency is an individual. There are no staff or volunteers working for the agency. These standards are therefore not applicable to this agency.

Individual practitioners

The provision is good.

The registered provider places a real premium on her professional development and continuously strives to increase her knowledge, experience & skills. She also keeps up-to-date with current issues in the adoption field, as well as current guidance and developments in legislation. The agency's work is clinically supervised at a frequency, which exceeds that laid down in the Adoption Support National Minimum Standards. There are excellent administrative facilities and infrastructure, which support a highly effective delivery of service. The agency is managed extremely efficiently, effectively and in accordance with its Statement of Purpose.

Complaints and representations

The provision is good.

The agency has a clearly written complaints policy and procedure, which complies with the Adoption Support National Minimum Standards. These documents encourage children and adults using the service to express any concerns or complaints they may have regarding the service. There is a separate system to record complaints, which meets the Adoption Support National Minimum Standards. There has been no complaints to the agency. From evidence obtained in the inspection though, it was evident that should any complaint be made to the agency, it would be viewed constructively and any learning gained from this used to inform agency practice.

Records

The provision is good.

The agency has a case recording policy, which meets the Adoption Support Agencies (England) and Adoption Agencies (miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2005. Case records are legible, clearly expressed, signed and dated. However, there is no distinction between third party and other information contained in the agency records. There is a separate recording system for complaints, allegation and personnel. Records are stored securely and in a manner to minimise the risk from fire, water or other disaster.

Fitness of premises

The provision is good.

The agency's premises are secure and suitable for the provision of adoption support services. The administrative systems in place are efficient and robust. Electronic case records kept in the agency's Information technology systems are safeguarded. Written case records are securely stored. The agency has the premises and contents fully insured.

Financial requirements

The provision is good.

The agency's financial processes and systems are properly operated and maintained in accordance with sound and appropriate accounting standards and practice. Financial accounts are audited on an annual basis by an independent external auditor. The agency is financially viable for continuity of service.

Recommendations

These recommendations relate to the National Minimum Standards and are seen as good practice for the registered provider(s) to consider carrying out.

- Ensure the safeguarding policy and procedures address allegations relating to historical abuse (NMS 2.4)