

Leslie Ironside

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Service address	35 Clermont Terrace, Brighton, BN1 6SJ
Telephone number	01273 709660
Fax number	
Email address	I.Ironside@btconnect.com
Website address	www.emotionaldevelopment.co.uk
Registered person	Dr Leslie Ironside
Registered manager	

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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

Dr Leslie Ironside is a Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist. He is registered as an Adoption Support Agency and provides a therapeutic consultation, assessment and treatment service to children and young people who have been adopted. In addition he also provides an assessment and treatment service to families who have adopted. Referrals to Dr Ironside are made by various organisations including local authority adoption services and those who refer themselves on a private basis.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding

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

This was a full announced inspection. The agency was inspected against the adoption support national minimum standards and regulations. The agency is well managed, both structurally and operationally, by an exceptionally committed and highly qualified Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist who provides an outstanding service to the children and adoptive families he provides a service to.

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 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, which results in a thoughtfully and sensitively delivered service to families, children and young people; with excellent outcomes achieved.

What has been improved since the last inspection

The agency continues a policy of best practice and consistently listens to the views of service users. The registered person has a clear focus on the individual needs of each particular service user and responds accordingly. A dynamic treatment model is maintained so that change is part of what is consistently thought about and acted upon if and when appropriate.

What they could do better

The quality of the service offered to children and adoptive is exceptional. Service user's interviewed during the inspection and feedback received was all extremely positive about the service offered. However the agency could develop its quality assurance system to ensure a more formalised feedback process as at present feedback is received from service users verbally and by email.

What sort of service is it?

Statement of purpose

The provision is outstanding.

The agency has a clearly written Statement of Purpose which accurately describes the services provided. It also has two child friendly children's guides; one for younger children and one for older children. These documents contain all the required information including how children can make a complaint, have access to an independent advocate and how to contact the Children's Rights Director.

Safeguarding and promoting welfare

The provision is outstanding.

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 which ensures the safety and protection of service users. The procedures are well written, reviewed annually and include procedures for dealing with allegations of historical abuse which may be made by service users during the course of service provision.

User focused services

The provision is good.

The agency ensures all adoptive families receive information about the services provided. This information can be produced in a variety of ways to meet the differing needs of those using the service. Requests for a service are responded to extremely promptly and service users can be seen in an emergency or out of normal working hours. The welfare and safety of the child and their family is carefully considered in deciding whether a service can be provided. 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 the wishes and feelings of adoptive families and children

regarding the service they require. A flexible and responsive service is provided to adoptive families and children, with the utmost of care taken, to ensure they receive the very best possible service.

Feedback from service users is seen as extremely important to the agency although at present this is obtained verbally and not in written form. The agency is currently in the process of developing a more formal approach to feedback and is currently reviewing how this should be done.

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 the child's needs, which are thoughtfully and sensitively delivered. There are effective and robust quality assurance systems in place, which 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, that they are fully consulted and are actively involved in any decisions which affects their lives. All of those using the service confirmed that it is an extremely, professional service and delivered to a very high standard. A number also indicated that they understood their child better and that without the agency's support they would not have survived. One service user commented, 'My family have found Dr Ironside's help invaluable in helping us cope with the difficulties that have come with adoption' while another stated, 'We are really impressed with Leslie Ironside and the service he offers. It has kept us afloat at very difficult times.'

Fitness to provide or manage an adoption support agency

The provision is outstanding.

The registered provider has the necessary skills, experience and professional to manage the agency. Dr Ironside is a Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist. He completed his training at the Tavistock Clinic, London in 1989 and completed his Doctorate in 2001. He is a full member of the Association of Child

Psychotherapists (ACP) and is also a registered member of the British Psychoanalytic Council (BCP) and The Tavistock Society of Psychotherapists and Allied Professionals.

Dr Ironside maintains exceptionally high standards and follows the ACP and BPC standards for professional development. Testimony to the work of Dr Ironside, one service user commented, 'I am grateful that we have been able to access Leslie's wisdom and experience' while another stated, 'Dr Ironside has good skills and is extremely knowledgeable.'

Dr Ironside manages the agency in a very effective and efficient manner. He is able to respond to service users in an emergency and can offer appointments out of hours. In addition he has the financial expertise to ensure that the agency is run on a sound financial basis and in a professional manner. Dr Ironside as a current Criminal Records Bureau check that is renewed every three years in line with the national minimum standards.

Management of the adoption support agency

The provision is outstanding.

Standard seven is not applicable as the registered provider is an individual and therefore does not need to appoint a manager.

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 effectively managed with excellent outcomes for those using the service. One service user stated, 'The child I support has extreme needs; Dr Ironside has provided me with amazing strategies, invaluable advice and given me the support and empathy to help with support her in the best way possible - I can only praise him in the highest way possible.' Similar statements were received from all stakeholders which clearly shows that Dr Ironside is offering a good all round quality service.

Employment and management of staff and volunteers

The provision was not judged.

Individual practitioners

The provision is outstanding.

The registered provider places a real premium on his professional development and continuously strives to increase his knowledge, experience and skills. He is also 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 national minimum standards. The administrative facilities and infrastructure are excellent which support that deliver a highly effective service. The agency is managed extremely efficiently, effectively and in accordance with the Statement of Purpose.

Complaints and representations

The provision is outstanding.

The agency has a clearly written complaints policy and procedure, which complies with the 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. There have been no complaints to the agency. From evidence obtained, 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 outstanding.

The agency has a case recording policy, which meets regulations. Case records are legible, clearly expressed, signed and dated. There is a separate recording system for complaints, allegations and personnel matters. 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 premises are secure and suitable for the provision of adoption support services. They are however not suitable for those service users who use a wheelchair although the agency does have alternative premises it can use if such a situation occurs. The administrative systems in place are efficient and robust. Additional safeguards are in place for the storage of electronic records. Written case records are securely stored. The premises and contents are fully insured. The agency has an appropriate disaster recovery plan.

Financial requirements

The provision is good.

The 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. The agency does not publish its charges for the services it offers. Fees are agreed with service users during the first initial consultation and depend on a number of circumstances including the work to be undertaken by Dr Ironside. However there is a clear email trail which indicates the fees agreed for each service user.

