

Promoting Active Choices Team

Inspection report for adoption support agency

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Inspector	Sue Winson
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Service address	Family Action Voluntary Action Leicestershire 9 Newarke Street Leicester LE1 5SN
Telephone number	01162574979
Fax number	
Email address	rachael.spiers@family-action.org.uk
Website address	www.family-action.org.uk
Registered person	
Registered manager	Rachael Spiers

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

Promoting Active Choices Team (PACT) is one element of the work of the therapeutic social work service run by Family Action. PACT is registered with Ofsted. The agency provides adoption support to children and their families commissioned by Leicestershire County Council, who refer them to the agency following an assessment of need. The agency's work includes individual work with children and young people and their parents and family work.

Summary

The overall quality rating is Good

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

This is a good service with some outstanding aspects in relation to user focussed services.

What the service does well

Outcomes for children are good and they and their families confirmed this in surveys and in conversations. They described the service they received as excellent and commented that they were fully consulted and their views and wishes were taken into consideration. They commented on the skills of the workers in making the sessions 'fun' for young people. The work is tailored to individual needs and is well planned, with regular reviews to discuss progress and is responsive to people's changing needs. The staff work effectively with other agencies to the benefit of children and their families, which works to avoid duplication and clarify roles. The organisation and managers support the staff to provide a good service, and they have access to effective supervision and training, which enables them to work creatively with individuals.

Policies and practices reflect equal opportunities and the promotion of equality and diversity is good.

What has been improved since the last inspection

This is the first inspection of the agency since its registration.

What they could do better

What sort of service is it?

Statement of purpose

The provision is good.

The agency has a clear Statement of Purpose which is up to date and accurately reflects the work undertaken. The children's guide is child friendly and contains all the required information. In addition there is a parent's guide to adoption support.

Safeguarding and promoting welfare

The provision is good.

Children and young people are well protected by the policies and practices of the agency. In addition staff have received training and examples were given where they followed appropriate procedures for the safety of children. Staff of the agency consistently inform parents about their policies, including safeguarding and confidentiality, and note on case files that they do so. Risk assessments are compiled, based on information from the commissioning authority. Staff work collaboratively with other agencies, including schools, for the safety of young people. Children and young people are given the option of having a parent with them until they are comfortable to meet with the worker on their own. Children said that they trust and feel safe with their workers.

User focused services

The provision is outstanding.

Children and young people have thorough needs assessments, initially carried out by the commissioning Local Authority and updated by the agency. They universally confirm that the service has met their needs. Parents are fully consulted about the planned areas of work and have been extremely positive in their comments about the service provided, their involvement and the outcomes for themselves and their sons and daughters. Comments about the agency include; 'helpful and efficient,' 'consistent in their advice,' 'professional but also friendly' and that they worked 'thoughtfully with sensitivity.'

The staff have been effective in promoting positive behaviour and relationships through a variety of techniques, geared to the wishes and abilities of children and young people. They are successful in engaging young people in work which is sometimes difficult for them through regular consultation and open communication. Staff are well trained and use a range of resources and strategies to work creatively with young people at their pace. Young people commented that the agency 'is very good at understanding children' and that the work 'helped me a lot.' Other professionals involved with the children commented on the regular feedback from

the agency and said that it 'does well with collaborative work with families and young people.'

Interventions are focussed and well planned and have positive outcomes for families. The plans are regularly reviewed in consultation with service users and there have been occasions where the timescales have been increased in the interests of children and their families. Preparation for the end of the service intervention is well planned and workers remind adults and children that they can contact their local authority should they need assistance in the future.

Service delivery

The provision is good.

Children and families receive a service from staff that are well qualified, experienced and skilled in this work. They are regularly supervised and they are fully supported. Team meetings allow for discussion of practice issues and ongoing development. Staff have regular consultation meetings with a psychologist, which allows for discussions of individual cases and themes, which enhance their learning and benefits families. Staff also have access to a range of training, including in-house sessions and courses run by local authorities and national organisations.

Fitness to provide or manage an adoption support agency

The provision is good.

The agency is managed by people who are suitable to work with children, and have appropriate qualifications, experience and skills in adoption work. Ongoing professional development is encouraged and well supported. They provide effective leadership and lines of accountability are clear.

Management of the adoption support agency

The provision is good.

The agency is managed effectively and efficiently to ensure a good quality service is delivered which meets the needs of children and their families. Ongoing monitoring is achieved through regular file audits and supervision of staff. All supervisory discussions are fully recorded on case files. The contract with the local authority is regularly reviewed and the agency has good lines of communication with them. The practices of the agency are underpinned by policies and procedures which are clear and meet with National Minimum Standards and regulations.

Employment and management of staff and volunteers

The provision is good.

The service ensures that staff are suitable to work with children and service users through robust recruitment practices. The manager and staff are fully supported and effectively supervised in their work and in addition have access to specialist support and advice to guide them.

Individual practitioners

The provision is not judged.

Complaints and representations

The provision is good.

Comprehensive and clear policies outline the agency's complaints procedures. They include provision for complaints to be made verbally, in writing, through the website or via a third party. They also state that the agency has a duty to provide children and young people with information about advocacy services and support to obtain an advocate. Children and young people confirmed that they know of their rights to complain and how to do so. The agency has received no complaints to date.

Records

The provision is good.

Records are clear, up to date and stored securely. Comprehensive and clear records demonstrate that the work is geared to individual needs. Files are well ordered and information can be found with ease.

Fitness of premises

The provision is good.

The premises and administrative systems are suitable to enable the agency to meet its Statement of Purpose. The agency had to move premises a short time ago and as a result do not have the space available to meet with children and families in the offices. However the staff have been creative in finding alternative venues, nearer to where the families live. The provision of laptops and facilities to work from home, mean that staff are cutting down on their travel where possible.

Financial requirements

The provision is good.

Family Action finance handbook outlines delegation, roles and responsibilities in terms of finances, and the agency provided evidence of financial viability.

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered provider(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.

Recommendations

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