

The Child Psychology Service Ltd

Inspection report for adoption support agency

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Inspector	Rosemary Dancer
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The Child Psychology Service (TCPS) has been in operation since April 2013. It is a not for profit company. In October 2013 the service was registered with Ofsted as an adoption support agency to enable work with people affected by adoption to be carried out. The main focus of this inspection is on the adoption work.

The service provides assessments, undertakes therapeutic work with families and offers consultations and parenting courses. Training is also provided on many topics related to child psychology for parents and professionals. Supervision is also available from TCPS to provide a psychological perspective to professionals on their clinical work. The service has directly worked three cases relating to adoption issues in the past twelve months. The provider is currently the only therapist working for the service.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

Adequate: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **outstanding**.

Parents, children and professionals receive a very high quality service from the provider and the therapeutic input has been life changing for children and families. The provider has a very clear focus on achieving the most positive outcomes possible for children and families using her service. She fully engages parents, children and professionals in the work she undertakes. She remains child focused at all times and has been able to build up exceptionally good connections with her clients, even with those children who are initially reluctant to take part in the work. Professionals who have worked with the provider are highly confident in her skills and abilities. A professional stated, 'she inspired me to have confidence in her abilities ...she has something extra to skill and knowledge and expertise, she has a style that makes people feel good a really positive attitude, calm tone, she is not floppy or weak she is very clear.'

The provider takes a very active involvement in driving developments in adoption

nationally and has recently had a book published. This is for professionals and parents to use to support children's emotional well-being and development.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Develop written procedures for dealing with allegations of historical abuse. (NMS 22.12)
- Submit the child protection procedures for consideration and comment to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and to the Local Authority Designated Officer for child protection (NMS 22.4)

Outcomes for service users

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

People using the service are fully involved in identifying the focus of the therapeutic input and the way in which the provider works with them; their views are fully considered. The provider's excellent assessment skills that mean she plans and delivers the sessions in a way that the clients can make the best use of. For example, children who have been reluctant to engage in therapy have been enabled to engage over time. This is due to the provider's skills in making effective relationships with children and her initiative use of therapeutic methods and resources.

Work carried out by the agency has prevented family breakdown. A parent stated, 'We went through a really difficult time and had it not been for (the provider) we would have broken down as a family...support from her has been significant.' Improvements in families' relationships and parent's parenting skills have been due to parents developing a clear understanding of how their child's background has impacted on their emotional well-being. Parents have increased in confidence and have developed effective strategies that support young people to modify their behaviour and begin the long process of healing. The significant improvements in family relationships has led to improved security and stability of placements. Work has enabled children to gain a better understanding of their situation, increased their ability to reflect on their emotional state and helped them develop more effective coping strategies. A social worker stated, 'The intervention left them in a far better place...far better than we thought would be possible.'

The input of the provider in children's schools has helped to prevent children's permanent exclusion from school. She has supported teaching staff to understand children's individual needs and the way they function. From this understanding school staff have been able to develop effective strategies for dealing with children's behaviour; this has significantly improved their life chances. A head teacher said that

the work carried out with them had been 'invaluable.' She went on to say, 'Just talking to her gave us a great insight about these boys and what they are going through ...the change has been dramatic ...so successful.'

Quality of service

The quality of the service is **outstanding**.

People using the service are provided with an excellent quality of service that is delivered in a prompt, knowledgeable and sensitive way.

Background information is used to undertake the thorough, thoughtful and clear assessments. Targets and desired outcomes are agreed with the family. The provider has excellent assessment skills and ensures that the way in which therapy is undertaken, best suits the clients' needs and preferences. The provider is flexible in her approach and pays excellent attention to ensuring that where needs change or are not being met the therapeutic input is adjusted to accommodate these.

The provider is extremely knowledgeable about the therapeutic aspects abuse and trauma have on children. She is very skilful at working with families and professionals to help them understand the impact of the child's experiences on their emotional well-being and behaviour. From this understanding she supports adults caring for children to develop effective, individualised, strategies to support children in their emotional and behavioural development. The work undoubtedly ensures that families stay together.

The provider ensures that people can access her services wherever they are geographically based through the use of electronic communication means. This has meant that the service can be accessed by families wherever they are based.

Safeguarding

The service is **good** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

Children are better safeguarded as a result of using this service. This is because their parents develop a clear understanding about how their child's early experiences have impacted on their emotional well-being and behaviour. The focus of the work is to help parents develop the strategies needed to support their child to develop attachments and make improvements in their overall emotional well-being.

The provider has a clear understanding about the implications historical abuse can have on an individual and understands how to deal with a disclosure of historic abuse. However, the safeguarding policy does not detail the action she would take in the event of such a disclosure. As currently she is the only therapist this has had no impact on children or adults using the service.

The agency has a safeguarding policy and procedure that has not yet been submitted to the Local Children's Safeguarding Board or the local authority

designated officer. The work undertaken by the agency could be in relation to a child living in any other local authority. However, links with safeguarding professionals within the local authority would provide a clear communication link for her to discuss any concerns she has about a child or an adult.

The provider operates in a clear and transparent way and makes it clear to people using the service the limitations of confidentiality should a safeguarding issue arise. The provider work closely with local authority social workers to ensure that children's safety and overall well-being is promoted.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the adoption support agency are **outstanding**.

The provider is a Chartered Clinical Psychologist, Chartered Scientist, an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society, on the Register of Approved Psychology Practice Supervisors and is regulated by the Health Professions Council. She has ten years' experience working with people with psychological difficulties, eight of those working with children. She is extremely skilled and highly thought of by parents, children and professionals. She sees the views of people using the service as extremely important in achieving successful outcomes. She adjusts the therapeutic input in line with these views and people's needs and abilities. A professional stated, 'she is an excellent, thoughtful practitioner ...a capable and competent psychologist who produces exceptionally high quality work.' Another stated, 'She is the soul of the intervention, she changed my thinking about how to work with families.'

The provider is highly ambitious for the service and is currently seeking to expand the adoption support work so that support is available to more people in need. She takes responsibility for her own training and receives regular clinical supervision from a suitably qualified person.

There is excellent partnership working with families and professionals that support outstanding outcomes to be achieved. A professional stated, 'She has been flexible and really supported us to understand the children and their needs.' Another stated, 'She is excellent at communication (with me as a professional).'

Detailed and thoughtful discharge reports are compiled that are of an excellent quality and are provided to parents and other professionals where appropriate. These clearly outline the progress made. Record keeping is of a high quality.

There have been no complaints made about the service but people using the service are aware of how to make a complaint. Any issues that arise during therapy are addressed by the provider in an informal way.

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 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the inspection framework and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of adoption support agencies.