

Catch-Point Consultancy CIC

Inspection report for adoption support agency

Unique reference number	SC067034
Inspection date	7 June 2016
Inspector	Linda Bond
Type of inspection	Full

Setting address	Vassell Centre, Gill Avenue, Fishponds, Bristol BS16 2QQ
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Registered person	Catch-Point Consultancy CIC
Registered manager	Frances Hasler
Responsible individual	Thomas Pyne
Date of last inspection	1 October 2014

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Service information

Brief description of the service

Catch Point Consultancy CIC undertakes a range of therapeutic and assessment work, using a trauma and recovery model with an emphasis on attachment theory. Therapy may be long or short term. The agency provides services to fostered and adopted children and their families.

Based in Bristol, the service offers regular therapeutic sessions at their office and at other locations around the country, including Hampshire, Wales and Devon.

The service is a not-for-profit community interest company, and is managed by a small team of directors. There are approximately 90 service users, including 60 adoptive families, who are in regular contact with the agency to receive therapy or other forms of support.

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

Requires improvement: 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 **good**

The overall effectiveness of this adoption support agency has been judged as good to reflect the outstanding quality of care and excellent outcomes for the majority of families and children using the service. In particular, the distinctive therapeutic models of intervention are reported by parents and social workers as being 'amazing' and 'there are tangible results'.

The agency provides a choice of approaches, including music, art, play, and dance and drama therapy, by a team of highly qualified, professionally accredited and skilled practitioners. As a result, families using this service are assured of receiving support that is current, and underpinned by research and practice, to a very high standard.

The service is led by a registered manager who is both inspirational and highly motivated. Staff report that they are supported through training and regular supervision to learn from each other and to continue to develop professionally. As a result of the leadership and governance from the directors, the service continues to improve and develop. Minor shortfalls in the overall monitoring and development of the service were identified, and are acknowledged by the manager and staff team. Strategies are already in place to address these.

Some families and social workers report delays in receiving reports and regular

communication. However, these are few and do not impact on the excellent outcomes that families are reporting. These include positive relationships between their child and school, a sense of clarity and belonging, an understanding of attachment and behaviours, and strategies to manage difficult behaviours.

The manager and staff team understand the importance of reflective practice, and make very good attempts to capture feedback from families and social workers to inform their practice. For example, questionnaires are adapted for children, young people and adults. However, the manager recognises that more attempts need to be made to ensure that families are able to contribute to and influence the development of the service.

Safeguarding procedures and practice are good. In particular, all staff are trained and knowledgeable about child protection to a high level, which means that the families and children who use the service remain safe. The designated safeguarding lead has implemented previously recognised areas of development in respect of recruitment. However, further shortfalls in respect of references and the interviewing process were identified during the course of the inspection. It is to be acknowledged that these gaps do not place children and families at risk, and the designated safeguarding lead was swift to address them during the course of the inspection.

Areas of improvement

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that the adoption support agency seeks feedback from the service users on the success of the service provision. This feedback is recorded centrally and on the case record of the service user (NMS 15.6).
- Ensure that the adoption agency/registered person of the adoption support agency formally approves the statement of purpose and the children's guides, and reviews them at least annually (NMS 18.3).
- Ensure that all people working in, or for the purposes of, the agency, and persons applying to be included on the central list, are interviewed as part of the selection process and have references checked to assess suitability before taking up their duties. Telephone enquiries are made to each referrer to verify the written references (NMS 21.1).
- Ensure that the agency can demonstrate, including from written records, that it consistently follows safe recruitment practice, and all applicable statutory requirements and guidance in the recruitment of staff, volunteers and persons on the central list (NMS 22.2).
- Ensure that the agency has a record of the recruitment and suitability checks which have been carried out for staff, volunteers and persons on the central list which includes; at least two references, preferably one from a current employer, and where possible a statement from each referee as to their

opinion of the person's suitability to work with children (NMS 21.3).

- Ensure that the agency's system for recruiting staff and others includes an effective system for reaching decisions as to who is to be appointed and the circumstances in which an application should be refused, in relation to staff or others, in the light of any criminal convictions or other concerns about suitability that are declared or discovered through the recruitment process (NMS 21.5).
- Ensure that there are clear and effective procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the agency. In particular, ensure that areas for improvement are included in the agency's development plan (NMS 25.1).

Experience and progress of, and outcomes for, service users

Judgement outcome: **good**

Outcomes are good because the responses from families, young people and social workers provided during the course of inspection, coupled with the responses to the Ofsted surveys, are exceptionally positive. Families report they are supported, listened to, valued and understood. One parent reported, 'we would not have survived as a family without the support.' In particular, as a result of the specific educational support link that the service provides, children experiencing secondary trauma and attachment-related difficulties are progressing well. One ex-service user who is now an adult continues to attend therapy sessions with her younger brothers and sisters. During the course of the inspection, she was able to share her positive experiences and spoke of how these had helped her to progress successfully through school and on to university.

The manager understands the importance of supporting the parents with their children's education. Liaison with schools is a vital part of the service's ethos. A skilled and qualified educational consultant has an excellent working relationship with schools. This has resulted in educational staff understanding and managing children better in the school setting, thereby reducing the stresses experienced by the families over school issues.

Families report that the therapists provide 'invaluable' support and help, enabling them to remain together as a family. Practical strategies are given that help the parents to manage crisis points and communicate effectively with other professionals. As a result, they say that their children 'progress well emotionally' and they are supported during meetings.

Social workers spoken with are extremely complimentary of the service, reporting that families have had extremely positive experiences. By receiving the 'excellent and supportive therapeutic service', disruptions to placements are avoided and parents feel empowered by having their confidence enhanced.

The service is, in the main, able to respond quickly to referrals by offering initial consultations, and parents report a sense of relief. However, a number of parents and professionals report a delay in this process and report feeling frustrated. The manager recognises from feedback and consultation that this remains an issue and has been swift to identify strategies to address this concern.

Quality of service provision

Judgement outcome: **outstanding**

The quality of the service provided is outstanding, because families receive packages of support and therapy that are exceptional. Highly qualified and skilled practitioners ensure through creative and bespoke therapeutic packages that parents and their children are central to the planning and decision-making processes. Parents report

consistently that they feel included, valued and respected. By listening and working closely with the family, the service is able to meet their changing needs. For example, different therapists will be introduced at any point to support emerging issues, thereby providing the family with choice and opportunities to work with other therapeutic approaches.

A particular strength of the service is the impressive knowledge and skill base of the registered manager. Parents and social workers who contributed to the inspection process provided overwhelming praise for the manager. The manager, who is also the clinical director, is thoroughly engaged and immersed in research and developments in the field of trauma and recovery. As a result of her dedication to this subject, she is able to lead a staff team that continues to learn and develop. Consequently, families are benefiting from practice that is at the forefront of research into the effects of attachment and trauma.

The service provides support to families across the country. Therapists travel frequently and, in doing so, show an excellent commitment to providing therapeutic sessions to families that do not live locally. As a group of knowledgeable and skilled practitioners, they recognise the need to work with the family, extended members of the family, schools and social workers as a group. The parents report that they feel supported by a network of people. Furthermore, the service is keen to develop additional services for families to access. For example, 'tea-time training' would enable parents to engage in training at times that are convenient and accessible.

The manager and core staff conduct detailed assessments and reports on the family's needs. These are produced to an excellent standard and provide family members with key information, the package of support and a research-informed analysis. While some delay in receiving these documents is reported by parents and social workers, These documents are of an exceptional standard, enabling the reader to be informed and guided. A recommendation related to the management of ensuring these are sent out in a timely fashion has been made based on feedback from some parents and social workers.

Safeguarding children, young people, adults and families

Judgement outcome: **good**

The arrangements in place to ensure that children and families are safeguarded are good. In the main, the service practises safe recruitment and the designated safeguarding lead is experienced, knowledgeable and trained in the process of safe recruitment. However, three staff files that were sampled had some minor errors in relation to references that were not correct. Furthermore, while files had sufficient information regarding applications, photo ID and qualifications, there was no evidence of how the decision to recruit the applicant had been reached, and the central register was not up-to-date. The designated safeguarding lead was swift to recognise and address these shortfalls, and children's and families' safety was not compromised. Nevertheless, a recommendation is made to make certain that the recruitment procedures are tightened.

The service pays particular attention to the training of the staff team. An induction and probationary period includes an extensive range of face-to-face and online safeguarding training, and a record of DBS checks and mandatory training is held centrally. By doing so, the service is able to ensure that all staff are kept up to date with current safeguarding practices.

The service has systems in place to ensure that all appropriate bodies, including Ofsted, are notified, should a child protection or safeguarding issue come to light. Since the previous inspection there have been no reportable incidents. All policies and procedures are reviewed regularly, and the designated safeguarding lead ensures that local safeguarding boards are liaised with when necessary.

The service has an effective complaints procedure and, since the last inspection, there have been just two complaints received. Both of these reflected the delay in receiving reports and were responded to swiftly by the service.

Leadership and management

Judgement outcome: **good**

The leadership and management of this service is good. It is led by a registered manager who is highly qualified and skilled in psychotherapy. She has considerable experience in residential work with children, teaching, training and writing, and holds the relevant leadership and management qualifications.

Since the previous inspection, the manager and core staff have worked extremely hard during a period of relocating the premises. As a result of this move, children, families and professionals have the use of premises that are centrally located, easily accessible, private, welcoming and safe.

Since the previous inspection, the service has experienced a significant period of growth and development in the services that they provide. These include an increased number of therapists, training opportunities for parents and therapeutic interventions. The growth of the service is testament to the skills and expertise of the manager. Overall, there is good monitoring and recording of this growth. Nonetheless, the manager recognises that this data is not effectively captured by the service's development plan, that feedback from parents and social workers is not being used to influence the development of the service, and neither is there a robust enough succession plan available for the directors. Recommendations for these to be further tightened are therefore made.

Parents and social workers spoken with could not speak highly enough of the registered manager's warmth, skill, expertise and knowledge. In particular, one parent spoke of how the manager gave 'practical advice and strategies that actually worked' and how 'she gets it'.

During the period of time that a family is involved with the service, there are very good attempts to consult with parents and children using a range of evaluative questionnaires. However, the service does not yet have a system in place to collate this data centrally. Therefore, a recommendation to develop one is made, and by

doing so the service will be able to demonstrate how the views and opinions of service users are used to influence the development of the service.

To complement her own skill base and proficiency, the manager has selected a team of therapists and administrators who have an extensive depth of knowledge and qualification, including adoption and fostering expertise. In doing so, the management and core staff team share responsibilities effectively.

All staff report that they receive regular supervision that is of an excellent quality. The manager uses this one-to-one time with staff to identify opportunities for them to continue to develop professionally and to ensure that their professional registrations are kept up to date.

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.