

Voluntary adoption agency – Monitoring visit

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| Name | Jigsaw Adoption |
| Inspection date | 18/10/2016 |
| Unique reference number | SC489014 |
| Type of inspection | Monitoring |
| Inspector | Rosie Dancer |

This monitoring visit.

A monitoring visit was undertaken on 18 October 2016 to assess whether the provider had complied with notices issued following the agency's first full inspection on 25 July 2016. The first notice was in relation to the sufficiency of qualified and experienced staff, the knowledge of the responsible individual about safeguarding children and adoption work, the guidance and support provided to the manager and the lack of ongoing development opportunities for her. The second notice was in relation to shortfalls in safeguarding policy and practice.

It was found in respect to the first notice that a review in relation to the staffing of the agency had been carried out and it had been concluded that: a full-time senior social worker was required to meet the needs of the agency; the manager's hours were not sufficient to meet the needs of the business; and the responsible individual made the decision that he would step down from the role due to his lack of knowledge and experience in adoption work.

The recruitment process for a full-time senior social worker was well underway with a person having been appointed, subject to satisfactory employment checks being received, the manager's hours were increased from three to an average of 20 hours per week and recruitment for a suitably qualified and knowledgeable person to undertake the responsible individual role was underway.

The review also identified that the manager needed to undertake training in safeguarding to refresh and update her knowledge. This had been achieved and she had delivered safeguarding training to the responsible individual, the second director and the panel members. The responsible individual had also undertaken training in safer recruitment of staff. A training plan had not been developed further for the manager as she was leaving the agency.

It was found in respect to the second notice that the safeguarding policy had been fully reviewed and updated by the manager in line with the compliance notice and in conjunction with guidance provided by Buckinghamshire local authority. As there had not been any safeguarding matters, the agency had not had an opportunity to demonstrate its effectiveness in practice.

There were eight requirements and six recommendations made at the full inspection in July 2016. Some progress had been made in relation to providing all staff and people working for the purposes of the agency with job descriptions, and specifically in developing a job description for the senior social worker post and for the agency decision maker. However, the latter required updating since the decision was made to incorporate this into the responsible individual role. Other roles within the agency also needed formalising through the development of job descriptions.

A formal training plan had not been developed as new personnel were joining the agency and their training needs will require assessment. There had been some progress in meeting staff's training needs as safeguarding training had been provided to all staff and agency representatives.

There had been no progress made in regard to carrying out a review of the

statement of purpose. This was because while the agency recruited new staff and finalised the role descriptions it had not been possible to finalise the document.

A requirement made about reviewing the status of some prospective adopters had not been fully met. The case had been reviewed by the agency but had not been referred to a panel so that the decision maker could make a decision about the continued suitability of the couple.

The requirement made regarding the monitoring and control of the agency had not been fully met. There had been some improvement in the oversight of practice because the manager had sufficient working hours to do this. The overall systems for monitoring the work and functioning of the agency remained underdeveloped.

A requirement in relation to staff recruitment was not assessed at the visit as no new staff had been formally appointed. The requirement has been repeated.

Following the inspection in July 2016, the agency agreed to not take on new applicants and had adhered to this. Before it opens its service up to new applicants, the agency must develop a clear and cohesive policy and procedure for the assessment and preparation of adopters.

The following requirements were found to have been met. The agency had developed a policy and procedure for supporting adoptive families. As only one placement had been made the week before the monitoring visit, it was not possible to assess the effectiveness of the support in practice and this will be further assessed at the next visit.

The management oversight of practice had improved as the manager's hours had been increased from three to an average of 20 hours per week.

The arrangements for support to social workers and the manager had improved. The social worker had received supervision monthly and the manager had a formal supervision session with the senior adviser for the agency. It is planned that when the new responsible individual commences work they will provide the manager with supervision. This will be further assessed at the next visit.

The manager had developed a clear reporting system in relation to notifying Ofsted of serious events. As there had not been any matter occurring that required notification this system had not been tested. This will be further assessed at the next visit.

A decision had been made that the agency adviser role will be the responsibility of the manager. This had not been included within the job description for the manager. This will be further assessed at the next visit.

There had been good progress in meeting a requirement and recommendation about the panel membership. A social worker with the required experience and a health professional had been appointed to the panel, pending employment checks. The agency had an advert on its website for panel members and the agency was continuing to recruit to its central list. This will be further assessed at the next visit.

The agency had made progress with a recommendation about the arrangements for deputising for the manager. It was planned that this will fall within the role of the responsible individual, when appointed. This needs to be clearly stated in the

job description for this post.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the progress in meeting the regulatory breaches identified at this visit.

Information about this voluntary adoption agency

This voluntary adoption agency operates under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and Part 2 of the Care Standards Act 2000. It is a registered company and operates as not for profit.

The agency undertakes work in respect of the recruitment, preparation, assessment and approval of domestic adopters and provides support services for its adoptive families.

What does the voluntary adoption agency need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Voluntary Adoption Agencies and the Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2003, the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 and the national minimum standards. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

| Requirement | Due date |
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| <p>The registered provider, the manager and, in relation to any branch, the branch manager, shall ensure that all permanent appointments of staff are subject to the satisfactory completion of a period of probation and provide all employees with a job description outlining their responsibilities.</p> <p>The registered provider, the manager and, in relation to any branch, the branch manager, shall ensure that all persons employed by the agency receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal and are enabled from time to time to obtain further qualifications appropriate to the work they perform. (The Voluntary Adoption Agencies and the Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2003 Regulation 15 (1) (a) (b) (2) (a) (b)). With specific reference to ensuring that there are job descriptions for all roles including panel members, specialist advisers and the leaders and developing a training programme for all people working for the agency.</p> | 30/12/2016 |
| <p>The registered provider and the manager shall—</p> <p>(a) keep under review and, where appropriate, revise the statement of purpose; and (b) notify the registration authority (The Voluntary Adoption Agencies and the Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2003 Regulation 4 (a) (b))</p> | 30/12/2016 |

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| <p>The adoption agency must review the approval of each prospective adopter in accordance with this regulation. At the end of the period of 10 working days referred to in paragraph (4)(c) (or earlier if the prospective adopter's comments are received before that period has expired), the adoption agency must send the prospective adopter's review report together with the prospective adopter's observations to the adoption panel. The adoption agency must obtain, so far as is reasonably practicable, any other relevant information which may be required by the adoption panel and send that information to the panel. The adoption panel must consider the prospective adopter's review report, the prospective adopter's observations and any other information passed to it by the adoption agency and make a recommendation to the agency as to whether the prospective adopter continues to be suitable to adopt a child. The adoption agency must make a decision as to whether the prospective adopter continues to be suitable to adopt a child and Regulations 30B (2) to (11) apply in relation to that decision by the agency. (The Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013 Regulation 30D (1) (5) (6) (7) (8))</p> | <p>30/12/2016</p> |
| <p>The registered provider, the manager, and the branch manager (if any) shall, having regard to the size of the agency or (as the case may be) branch and the agency's statement of purpose and the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who may be, or have been, placed for adoption by the agency, carry on or manage the agency or (as the case may be) branch, with sufficient care, competence and skill. (The Voluntary Adoption Agencies and the Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2003 Regulation 8 (1)). This is with specific reference to ensuring that the agency is effectively monitored and controlled and ensuring that there are clear policies and procedures in relation to the assessment and preparation of adopters.</p> | <p>30/12/2016</p> |
| <p>The registered provider, the manager and, in relation to any branch, the branch manager, shall not employ a person to work for the purposes of the agency unless that person is fit to work for the purposes of an agency or allow a person to whom paragraph (2) applies, to work for the purposes of the agency unless that person is fit to work for the purposes of an agency. This paragraph applies to any person who is employed by a person other than the registered provider, in a position in which he may in the course of his duties have regular contact with children who may be, or have been, placed for adoption by the</p> | <p>30/11/2016</p> |

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| <p>agency. For the purposes of paragraph (1), a person is not fit to work for the purposes of an agency unless he is of integrity and good character, he has the qualifications, skills and experience necessary for the work he is to perform, he is physically and mentally fit for the work he is to perform and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to him in respect of each of the matters specified in Schedule 2. (The Voluntary Adoption Agencies and the Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2003 Regulation 14 (1) (a) (b) (2) (3) (a) (b) (c) (d))</p> | |
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- During an investigation the agency makes support, which is independent of the agency, available to the person subject of the allegation. (NMS 22.11)
- Ensure the agency has and implements a written policy that clarifies the purpose, format and content of information to be kept on the agency's files, on the child's and prospective adopters' case records. (NMS 27.1)
- Where an agency will not learn the full history by conducting a criminal record check and other background checks on the prospective adopter, for example, where they have lived abroad for an extended period, it should decide whether it should carry out any other checks or take up additional references. The agency should ensure it has sufficient information to justify continuing with Stage One but not delay the approval process. If it decides not to proceed, it should provide the prospective adopter with a clear written explanation of the reasons why. (Adoption Statutory Guidance, page 65, paragraph 3.26)
- Where the criminal record checks disclose previous convictions or cautions for non-specified offences, the agency may consider that the prospective adopter is not suitable to adopt. In such circumstances, the agency must exercise its discretion and decide whether to continue with Stage One. If it decides not to proceed, it must notify the prospective adopter in writing, with reasons, without delay. (Adoption Statutory Guidance, page 66, paragraph 3.30)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the voluntary adoption agency since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

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