

# SC391729 Adoption Support

4 The Meadows, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 8TG

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this adoption support agency

This adoption support agency is operated by an individual and is registered to provide services to adults and children. Direct work with children includes play therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy, Theraplay and life story work, which is supplemented by advice, guidance and support for adoptive parents. These services are also extended to children who are in fostering families and those on special guardianship order, which are not the subject of this inspection. In the last year, the agency has supported 11 families.

### Inspection dates: 24 to 26 February 2020

<b>Overall experience and progress of service users, taking into account</b>	<b>outstanding</b>
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How well children, young people and adults are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The adoption support agency provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the adoption support agency contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for service users.

**Date of last inspection:** 8 August 2016

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## **Inspection judgement**

### **Overall experiences and progress of service users: outstanding**

The service provides a highly responsive and flexible approach to adoption support. Families who have used this service say that this has significantly changed their lives for the better. One parent said, 'Without the support provided, our family would have fallen apart. It has been like the glue that has held us all together. She has helped us to overcome barriers, helped us to believe in ourselves as parents and to believe in our children.'

The provider has an excellent range of skills to use in her work with children and families. She demonstrates a detailed knowledge of adoption issues and draws on established research on the impact of separation and trauma on children's development, attachment and relationships. Consequently, the provider helps children to understand the impact that their past has on their well-being and behaviour, thus providing the foundations for them to begin to form emotional bonds with their adoptive family.

Children love coming to see this provider because they have fun. The provider demonstrates an excellent understanding of each child's individual needs, and makes great efforts to find materials, toys and approaches which enhance children's ability to express themselves. Children look forward to their therapy sessions and see the provider as someone who listens and understands them, does not judge them and allows them to be themselves. One child said, 'The thing about [this provider] is that she makes me feel special. She lets us have fun. She lets us say what we think and feel, and this makes it easier to understand my family.'

Parents are actively involved in the work undertaken with their children. This enables them to develop a deeper understanding of the impact of the child's past experiences and provides them with meaningful strategies to support the child. One parent said, 'I now understand how important it is for my children to be able to express themselves in a way which [is] safe and enjoyable. This means that they are less upset and that their anxieties are channeled positively. My children's behaviour has significantly improved as a result. I now know that they love me, and they know that I love them.'

As a result of the progress made by their children, parents themselves become more resilient. They regain hope and enthusiasm for parenting because they have been supported by a provider who helps them to gain a deeper insight into their children's needs. This enhances their ability to love, nurture and support their children.

### **How well children, young people and adults are helped and protected: outstanding**

The provider has an excellent understanding about safeguarding children. She has developed a clear policy and comprehensive procedures which guide her should any safeguarding issue arise and which provide clarity about the actions to be taken

should the need arise. The provider attends regular training and ensures that safeguarding is of central consideration in all aspects of her work. She demonstrates a clear understanding of increased vulnerability of children who have suffered traumatic experiences in their past and supports parents in their understanding of the impact of past trauma and on their children and how this affects their behaviour and emotional well-being.

Strong and effective working relationships have been established with professionals from referring agencies and local authority social work teams. The provider works closely with health and education providers to ensure a consistency of approach when dealing with children's more challenging behaviour. The provider has undertaken assessments that specifically address the learning needs of adopted children in a therapeutic context. This has resulted in teachers and other professionals developing a deeper understanding of the needs and vulnerabilities of children who are adopted.

The provider has an excellent knowledge of when and how to escalate matters of concern and has shared information as required. Since the last inspection, there have been no safeguarding matters that have required referral to the relevant bodies.

There is a comprehensive complaints procedure in place, including information specifically designed for children informing them of how to make a complaint should they wish to do so and what will happen as a result. Since the last inspection, there have been no complaints about the service.

A comprehensive health and safety policy is in place. The provider ensures that risk assessments are completed on a regular basis and that children and their parents are protected from any hazards or risks while in the provider's home. Information is child-friendly and pictorial as appropriate. Improvements in this area were recommended at the last inspection and the provider has robustly addressed these.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

The agency is operated by a dedicated, efficient, suitably qualified and experienced professional. The needs of the children are of central consideration to all aspects of the provider's practice.

Regular monitoring and review of the work undertaken ensures that the services offered remain focused upon the needs of each child and their family. This area was the subject of a recommendation at the last inspection and the provider has meticulously addressed this shortfall. The provider invites feedback from those who have used her services, using specifically designed formats which help children and their parents to think carefully about the impact the provider has had upon their lives. Feedback is thoroughly evaluated on an individual and on a service level and is used effectively to inform improvements.

The provider maintains exceptionally high standards of reflective practice. She

receives good-quality, focused clinical supervision and consults regularly with different professionals who are chosen carefully to help the provider to develop specific areas of her work. This results in the consistent re-evaluation of the provider's work in order to make continual improvements.

The provider works closely with professionals from a number of local authorities. One social worker described her as 'simply amazing' and said, 'The difference she makes to children's lives is incredible. I have worked with this provider over a number of years. Her dedication and passion for improving the life chances of children is enviable and the outcomes she achieves are wonderful.'

Records relating to children and their families are written in a sensitive manner and are conducive to children's needs should they wish to access these in the future. The records contain pictures and drawings and form part of the child's adoption journey. Records are stored safely, and confidentiality is of utmost importance to the provider.

The statement of purpose describes the service offered by the provider, her experience and skills and the manner in which the service is to be provided. This includes a description of the intended outcomes for children and families. The statement of purpose is not written in a manner that is helpful to children and families in crisis. A recommendation is given in relation to this.

## **What does the adoption support agency need to do to improve?**

### **Recommendations**

- The adoption agency and adoption support agency has a clear statement of purpose which is available to and understood by staff, volunteers, children, birth parents and guardians, prospective adopters and adopters, and is reflected in any policies, procedures and guidance. (NMS 18.1)

This specifically relates to the language used and the clarity of the information contained in the statement of purpose to ensure that this is conducive to the needs of parents and children in crisis.

### **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, young people and adults, using the 'Social care common inspection framework'.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the adoption support agency, how it meets the core functions as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Adoption Support Agencies (England) and Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2005 and the national minimum standards.

## **Adoption support agency details**

**Unique reference number:** SC391729

**Registered provider:** Kate McDermott (Trading as Kate Kirk)

**Registered provider address:** 4 The Meadows, Chichester PO19 8TG

**Responsible individual:** not applicable

**Registered manager:** Kathleen Kirk

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### **Inspector**

Jacqueline Georgiou, Ofsted Inspector

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