

# CTC Psychological Services

The Partnership of CTC Psychological Services

20 Walpole Street, Chester CH1 4HG

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this adoption support agency

CTC Psychological Services was registered to provide adoption support services in June 2014. It provides a range of therapeutic and psychological services to adults and children. Only the agency's adoption support work was considered as part of this inspection.

The agency employs psychologists and counsellors, who undertake a range of work for the agency. The agency provides psychological assessments and therapeutic interventions, commissioned by regional adoption agencies, to support adopted children and their families. In the 12 months leading up to this inspection, the agency has worked with 39 children and their families.

The registered manager is a director of the agency and has managed the service since its registration.

### Inspection dates: 23 to 25 May 2022

<b>Overall experience and progress of service users, taking into account</b>	<b>good</b>
How well children, young people and adults are helped and protected	good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good

The adoption support agency provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 9 October 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Inspection judgement

### Overall experience and progress of service users: good

Most of the agency's adoption work starts with a request from one of the regional adoption agencies for a psychological assessment. Assessments are comprehensive and conclude with clear recommendations about any future therapeutic intervention. The agency may then proceed to undertake therapy with the child/children and their adoptive parents.

The agency has two age-appropriate children's guides that help explain to children what attending therapy will be like. They have also produced a number of short video clips that are accessible on the agency's website, with children talking about what happens when they come for therapy. These materials help reduce children's anxieties about attending.

Therapists spend time developing trusting relationships with children. They demonstrate a child-centred approach, ensuring that therapy proceeds at the right pace for each child.

The agency was quick to adapt the way in which it delivered therapy during the period of COVID-19, switching speedily to virtual working to ensure a continuous service for children and families. This was appreciated by families and social workers. However, due to several staff leaving, there has been some disruption to established therapeutic relationships, which has had a negative impact on some children.

While parents, children and social workers did comment on the impact of staff changes, they also provided a lot of positive feedback regarding the difference that their involvement with the agency has made. Although progress is sometimes slow, parents now have a greater understanding of their child's early trauma and the impact on their current behaviours. This, coupled with the opportunity to discuss ongoing difficulties, has enabled many families to cope with the challenges on a day-to-day basis.

One parent said, 'The input we have had from the agency has been hugely significant for us as a family. We were in absolute crisis.' A child accessing therapy also said, 'Therapy has made an enormous difference. I did suffer from anxiety, but I now feel much more able to cope.' Such testimonies illustrate the positive impact that therapy is having.

Children and their families are treated with dignity and respect. They feel listened to. The child's wishes and feelings are paramount in decision-making. Some therapy sessions continue to take place virtually, as some children are more comfortable with this medium and it is working well for them. Therapists respect and work with this.

The agency's record-keeping has improved since the last inspection. A new electronic recording system has been introduced. Records are clear and up to date. Similarly, regular review reports ensure that the progress of any therapeutic intervention is evaluated. Social workers report being kept well informed by the agency.

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

There have been improvements in safeguarding practice since the last inspection. Staff are now routinely completing safeguarding training, as well as specific courses to inform their work with children, such as online safety.

The agency has also completed a thorough review of its safeguarding policy and procedure. Consultation took place with local safeguarding bodies as part of this process, to ensure that the revised procedures were compatible with local protocols. Staff maintain a good chronology of any safeguarding incidents and work collaboratively with other agencies. This helps to ensure children's safety.

Improvements have been made to the agency's whistle-blowing and complaints policies and procedures. A central log is now being maintained of any complaints received, either formal or informal, and there is a clear chronology of the actions taken. Some amendments to practice have been made as a result, demonstrating that the agency is learning from these infrequent complaints.

Therapists are acutely aware of the implications of a child's early life experiences. Children frequently present with attachment difficulties. Staff are alert to the need for routine and consistency and for therapy to be regular and reliable. Ultimately, children feel they are in a safe place. Similarly, adopters feel safe to express their feelings openly. The agency also offers an in-depth training programme for adopters on attachment, which adoptive parents report has been particularly beneficial. This also gives parents the opportunity to meet each other, providing an arena for more informal support.

Since the last inspection, the agency has made improvements to its recruitment processes. However, some recruitment shortfalls were identified at this inspection. Some staff have been permitted to start work without all reference checks being completed. While staff are technically still on induction, working in the agency does give them access to confidential information. There is also the potential that the agency may receive concerning information as part of these checks and no longer wishes to employ the individual. A further requirement is made at this inspection to ensure the robustness of the recruitment process.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

The registered manager is a partner in the agency. She is an experienced psychotherapist. She is respected for her expertise in working with children and

families who have suffered trauma. She has a suitable management qualification. She is committed to providing a good-quality adoption support service and is receptive to suggestions for improvement.

Since the last inspection, the agency has become an active member of the consortium of adoption support agencies, providing it with peer support, networking opportunities and access to training. This has been beneficial for staff and the manager.

Staff are positive about working for the agency. One staff member commented, 'This is an inclusive service, where expertise and knowledge are shared, and each member of the teams contribution is valued.' Staff have good access to training to support their specialism and accreditation. They feel valued and supported.

Similarly, staff receive regular supervision, either individually or in a group, largely dependent on their role. However, current practice is for the staff member and their supervisor to keep separate records, rather than one agreed copy of their discussions. Consequently, there is the potential for discrepancies and misunderstandings. Furthermore, casework discussions and decisions are not recorded on the child's record, making decision-making unclear. In addition, as no central record is being maintained, these records are not accessible for staff who no longer work for the agency, as regulation requires.

The statement of purpose outlines the aims and objectives of the agency. The document is accessible on the agency's website. However, it has not been routinely updated in relation to staff changes and copies have not been sent to Ofsted, as required.

The agency requests feedback from parents and children. However, it is not always clear if this has been used effectively to amend agency practice. Similarly, it is not clear if there is any learning to be taken from the turnover of staff. The six-monthly management reports on the operation of the agency are completed, but they lack evaluation, which limits their effectiveness.

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

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, the Adoption Support Agencies (England) and Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2005 and the national minimum standards. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The registered person shall—</p> <p>keep under review and, where appropriate, revise the statement of purpose and children’s guide;</p> <p>notify the registration authority of any such revision within 28 days of making the revision. (The adoption support agencies (England) and adoption agencies (miscellaneous amendments) regulations 2005, regulation 6 (a)(b))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that the statement of purpose contains correct information regarding staff working in the agency and any update is forwarded to Ofsted on completion.</p>	30 June 2022
<p>The registered person shall not—</p> <p>employ a person to work for the purposes of the agency unless that person is fit to work for the purposes of the agency;</p> <p>For the purposes of paragraph (1), a person is not fit to work for the purposes of an agency unless—</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to him in respect of each of the matters specified in Schedule 2. (The adoption support agencies (England) and adoption agencies (miscellaneous amendments) regulations 2005, regulation 19 (1)(a)(2)(d))</p> <p>Specifically, that all employment checks are completed prior to an individual taking up employment.</p>	30 June 2022
<p>The registered person shall maintain and keep up to date the records specified in Schedule 3.</p>	30 June 2022

The records referred to in paragraph (1) shall be retained for at least 15 years from the date of the last entry. (The adoption support agencies (England) and adoption agencies (miscellaneous amendments) regulations 2005, regulation 22 (1)(2))

Specifically, that the agreed supervision record is maintained on staff personnel files for staff who no longer work for the agency.

## Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that by exercising effective leadership of the staff and operation, the agency is organised, managed and staffed in a manner that delivers the best possible service provision for the agency's service users. In particular, that any disruption to the therapeutic relationship is minimised by continuity of staffing. (Adoption: national minimum standards 2014, 19.6)
- The registered person should ensure that a written record is kept by the agency detailing the time and date and length of each supervision held for each member of staff, including the registered person. The record should be signed by the supervisor and the member of staff at the end of the supervision. (Adoption: national minimum standards 2014, 24.5)

## 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:** SC478850

**Registered provider:** The Partnership of CTC Psychological Services

**Registered provider address:** 20 Walpole Street, Chester CH1 4HG

**Responsible individual:** Julian Long

**Registered manager:** Jeanie McIntee

**Telephone number:** 01224 390121

**Email address:** admin@ctcps.co.uk

## **Inspectors**

Mandy Williams, Social Care Inspector

Dawn Parton, Social Care Inspector

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