

Dandelion Clock Counselling Adoption Support

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this adoption support agency

Dandelion Clock Counselling Adoption Support was registered to provide adoption support services in June 2021. Services are delivered by the registered person, who is operating as a sole provider, providing counselling to those affected by adoption. This includes birth parents, adoptive parents and adult adoptees. The service only provides counselling for adults.

Since registration, the agency has worked with 17 adults who have all self-funded their counselling sessions.

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 October 2022

Overall experience and progress of service users, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

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

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgement

Overall experiences and progress of service users: good

The quality of individualised support provided to adults affected by adoption is good. Service users report being able to develop a trusting relationship with the registered person, which has enabled them to talk openly about their feelings and anxieties. This has helped them to engage in counselling in a meaningful way.

Service users are treated with dignity and respect. The provider delivers counselling using the most-appropriate medium for the service user, including online, by telephone or face to face. This ensures the best environment for the individual to engage in the process.

Clear contracts outlining the arrangement for counselling are agreed at the beginning of any work. This includes expectations, confidentiality and how to raise a complaint if required. This ensures that everyone is clear about what has been agreed. An initial block of six sessions is usually agreed, but the agency is flexible about making alterations to this to meet the needs of the service user. The agency's record-keeping is accurate and up to date.

Service users spoken to at inspection, as well those who responded to Ofsted's annual survey, were very positive about the agency. They report feeling more positive as a result of the counselling that they have received. Positive comments include:

- 'I could openly express how I felt and was comfortable doing so.'
- 'She took time to listen to me.'
- 'It really helped get my life back on track.'
- 'There is a real understanding about adoption, that other counsellors do not have.'

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

Adult service users report feeling listened to, and the impact of their previous experiences is understood.

The registered manager is developing an increased specialism in adoption and is vigilant to the impact of adoption on all parties.

While the agency is only working with adults, the registered person is alert to her safeguarding responsibilities, particularly the disclosure of historic abuse. A safeguarding policy outlines the actions that will be taken in such circumstances. However, the current policy is unclear about the role of the designated officer and

when it would be more appropriate to contact other safeguarding bodies. To date, there have been no such disclosures, limiting the effects of this uncertainty.

The registered manager is also acutely aware of her responsibilities to ensure the safety and well-being of the adults who she is working with. This includes the necessity to pass on information to other agencies if required.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager maintains high standards of practice. She receives regular professional supervision, which is structured and focused on using the best strategies to help the service user. However, current practice is for the manager and her supervisor to keep their own record of any discussion, rather than keeping one agreed copy of their discussion. Consequently, there is the potential for discrepancy and misunderstanding.

The agency's statement of purpose outlines its objectives clearly. However, it currently contains the agency's safeguarding policy, which itself requires review. The statement of purpose has not been reviewed annually as required.

The registered manager is a member of a professional body. She completes regular training, ensuring that she keeps abreast of any new initiatives and maintains her knowledge and skills. The agency has also joined the consortium of adoption support agencies, providing the registered person with peer support, networking opportunities and access to specialist training.

The agency requests feedback from service users at the conclusion of their involvement. This helps to inform future service provision. The provider is eager to develop the service further to meet the need of those accessing it and engage in partnership working with other adoption agencies in the locality.

The agency's website provides helpful information on the services provided. Several service users have approached the agency due to the manager's knowledge of adoption issues, despite living in other areas of the country. This sets her apart from other counsellors.

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 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;</p> <p>notify the registration authority of any such revision within 28 days of making the revision.</p> <p>(The adoption support agencies (England) and adoption agencies (miscellaneous amendments) regulations 2005, regulation 6 (a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that the statement of purpose is reviewed annually. If any amendments are made, ensure that Ofsted is informed within 28 days by submitting a reviewed statement of purpose.</p>	5 December 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the agency's procedure is in line with government guidance and requirements, including the duty to refer information to statutory bodies. In particular, ensure that the role of the designated officer and the procedure for referral to other safeguarding bodies is clear and understood. (Adoption: national minimum standards 2014 22.2)
- Ensure that a record is kept by the agency, detailing the time, date and length of each supervision held for the registered person. Ensure that the record is signed by the supervisor and the registered person 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: 2627279

Registered provider: Dandelion Clock counselling Adoptions Support

Registered provider address:

Responsible individual: Fiona Astbury

Registered manager: Fiona Astbury

Telephone number: 07582 688930

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Inspectors

Mandy Williams, Social Care Inspector

Suzanne Birchall, Social Care Inspector

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