

# Family Futures CIC

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440A Hornsey Road, London N19 4EB

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this voluntary adoption agency

Family Futures CIC is a not-for-profit community interest company that registered with Ofsted in May 2013. Family Futures provides a number of different services for children, families and adults who have been fostered, adopted or placed in special guardianship families.

Through i-adopt service, the agency recruits, prepares and assesses prospective adopters, primarily for children with a significant history of developmental trauma. At the time of this inspection, three families were going through the assessment process, six families were waiting to be matched with children and one family was matched with a child. One child was placed with the i-adopt family and were waiting for the outcome of the application for the adoption order. Three further i-adopt families adopted children in the last 12 months.

The agency provides specialist multi-disciplinary assessments and treatment services for children with a history of early trauma who are fostered, adopted, placed in special guardianship placements or living with their birth families. At the time of the inspection, the number of children in assessment and therapy was 176. The agency also provides adoption support for adults.

The provider is also registered to provide an independent fostering agency (IFA). The IFA will be inspected separately, after it becomes operational.

The agency provides a training and consultancy service.

### Inspection dates: 12 to 16 December 2022

**Overall experiences and progress of service users, taking into account** **outstanding**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The voluntary adoption agency provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the voluntary adoption agency contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children, young people and adults.

**Date of previous inspection:** 30 July 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Inspection judgements

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

The quality of all aspects of the service provided by this agency is outstanding. The agency's adoption practices are innovative, thoughtful, insightful and highly effective in securing positive experiences for children and adults.

This agency pioneered bringing therapeutic and social work together many years ago and has continued to refine this approach to adoption. This multi-disciplinary approach has been highly effective in preparing prospective adopters and supporting children and families post-adoption. Some adopters spoken to highlighted being able to access different therapies, including occupational therapy, under one roof as a real strength of the agency.

The assessments of prospective adopters are of excellent quality. Having a social worker and a psychotherapist working together with the prospective adopters from the very beginning of their journey adds to the depth and quality of the assessments.

The creative use of therapeutic tools during the preparation phase enables adopters to gain increased insight into the impact of children's trauma. This equips them to provide empathic care. The agency prepares adopters very well for parenting children with developmental traumas.

Matching is one of the agency's many strengths. Comprehensive and insightful assessments mean that the staff know prospective adopters exceptionally well. All adopters spoken to clearly loved their children and were ambitious for them to have the best opportunities for healing and growth.

The agency promotes permanency and excellent outcomes for children and their adoptive families. There have been no adoption breakdowns. The adopters talked about how crucial the agency's support has been in enabling them to stay together as families while dealing with significant difficulties. An adopter said that the agency has not only helped them to survive but to thrive as a family.

The agency's staff also provide specialist assessments for individual children within their educational environment. They advise families and teachers on how best to support children's education. The agency is instrumental in ensuring that children consistently receive the best support to help them make progress and achieve.

The agency has continued to develop its therapeutic approach. Staff are in tune with children's emotions, and they ensure that children receive specific therapeutic interventions at the right time. Staff provide intensive life-story work when children are ready for it.

All members of the families spoken to talked exceptionally positively about their experiences and how the agency has enriched their lives. In particular, they appreciated what they described as the 'human aspect' of the agency. The adopters said that they felt cared for and that the agency exceeded all their expectations.

Staff help children to understand their life journey and make progress through fun and play. One child talked about the valuable support that they receive from kind and caring staff. The agency has created a beautiful physical environment for children in which they receive their therapies. One child described it as a special place for adopted children.

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

Excellent safeguarding practices are intrinsic to this agency. Highly developed systems, policies and procedures are consistently implemented in order to secure children's welfare and safety.

Safeguarding is everybody's business in this agency. Each element of the service makes an effective contribution to helping and protecting children. The agency's decision-maker provides robust scrutiny of the panel's recommendations. The panel meaningfully examines comprehensive assessment reports. Staff and adopters recognise children's vulnerabilities and risks. Adopters know how to safeguard children, raise concerns and seek help and support when needed.

The agency's safe and highly supportive therapeutic environment enables children and adults to explore and talk openly about their difficult past experiences. This has included talking about the abuse that they have experienced themselves.

The agency has an effective procedure for sharing safeguarding information. Staff ensure that the appropriate authorities are informed of significant information without delay. This includes any low-level concerns.

The senior management team meets on a quarterly basis to monitor any safeguarding issues that have arisen during the review period. They ensure, as much as it is in their power, that all issues have been followed up by the relevant agencies. They advocate well for children and adults within the professional network.

The agency facilitates behaviour management strategies that are based on trauma-informed research. The agency helps children to address the core difficulties that underlie their experiences and behaviours. This bespoke and holistic approach has proven to be highly effective in helping children to gain a better self-awareness and understanding of their difficult emotions, and greater control of their behaviours.

The agency follows safe recruitment procedures when appointing staff. Making sure that each staff member is suitable for their role adds to the safeguarding of children.

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

The leadership and management of this agency are excellent. Highly developed and clear processes enable leaders and managers to fulfil their vision and sustain an outstanding service. The ethical aspect of the agency's leadership is strong. The agency is a not-for-profit organisation in which the care of children is a priority.

The promotion of diversity and equality is integral to the agency's ethos. Almost all adults spoken to talked about respect as being one of the main strengths of the agency. One Black family talked about the positive impact on their child of seeing Black people in professional roles. One child also highlighted respect as one of the best things about the agency and said, 'You can be yourself.'

The agency has highly developed monitoring systems and a strong improvement culture. Leaders and managers have created an open atmosphere, which fosters curiosity, critical thinking and evidence-based practices. They are spearheading innovation, evaluation and research. They have remained on the cutting edge of matters relating to the impact of early trauma. Their latest research focuses on therapeutic approaches to supporting children who have been exposed to alcohol before they were born.

Leaders and managers have high levels of expertise and competence. They are exemplary adoption practitioners and inspire their staff. They disseminate their knowledge to the wider community through their training programme and publishing of their research. They provide free webinars to parents.

The arrangements for staff supervision are comprehensive and include supervision from external consultants. Staff have excellent opportunities for professional development.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Voluntary Adoption Agencies and the Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2003, the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005, any other relevant legislation, and the national minimum standards.

## **Voluntary adoption agency details**

**Unique reference number:** SC462984

**Registered provider:** Family Futures CIC

**Registered provider address:** Wellesley House, Duke of Wellington Avenue,  
London, Greenwich SE18 6SS

**Responsible individual:** Michael Kerman

**Telephone number:** 020 7354 4161

**Email address:** [jay@familyfutures.co.uk](mailto:jay@familyfutures.co.uk)

## **Inspector**

Seka Graovac, Social Care Inspector

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