

Brighter Futures for Children

Brighter Futures for Children Limited

Reading BC, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading, Berkshire RG1 2LU

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this voluntary adoption agency

The agency's statement of purpose states that the Brighter Futures for Children adoption service is a registered voluntary adoption agency which holds responsibility for discharging the adoption functions of Brighter Futures for Children. The agency's registration permits it to provide domestic adoption services, intermediary services, and birth records counselling.

Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC) is a member of the Adopt Thames Valley (ATV) regional adoption agency.

The agency was registered with Ofsted in November 2018. This is the agency's first inspection. The manager was appointed to the position in January 2020 and has been registered with Ofsted since August 2020.

Inspection dates: 30 January to 3 February 2023

Overall experiences 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	outstanding

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

Date of previous inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of service users: good

The agency has delegated most of its adoption functions to Adopt Thames Valley regional adoption agency. However, the agency still retains corporate responsibility for all Reading borough children who are looked after.

Early permanence is central to the agency's operational model and is promoted by the agency when there is a plan for adoption for children. Children benefit from an increased pool of adopters by being part of a regional adoption agency. Efficient tracking systems show the good efforts that the staff make to find the right permanent families for children.

The agency operates a model of practice that reduces the need to change allocated social workers. This means that one social worker allocated to the child from the point they become looked after develops an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the child's needs.

Children placed by the agency make progress and achieve positive outcomes. Most notably, these include children with complex physical and learning needs, older children and sibling groups. This is because the agency works well with the regional adoption agency in ensuring there is a vigorous matching process. This provides the children with a stable and loving family. Adopters speak with love and pride about the progress their children are making since being placed with them.

The staff succeed in placing children who have been waiting a long time for an adoptive family. Due to extensive support from the agency, such as the provision of therapeutic play sessions, accessible support from highly skilled social workers and significant financial support packages, placement stability is a feature the agency can be proud of. One adoptive parent described this support as 'amazing and brilliant'.

In the main, the children's adoption records are comprehensive and summarise well the information collected during the adoption process. However, the inspector found a small number of records that would benefit from having a clearer description of health outcomes.

Ongoing life-story work and preparation, letter-box contact, later life letters and the provision of life books are of excellent quality. This means that adopters can better support the child's understanding of adoption and, when possible, maintain positive relationships with the child's birth family.

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

The agency ensures that the safety of children is at the forefront of all staff's practice. Staff demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the agency's safeguarding policies and procedures. The agency can evidence strong links with safeguarding professionals and refers incidents to them if necessary.

The safety of children is maintained through a rigorous assessment of prospective adopters. The agency has excellent oversight of the safeguarding measures applied by the regional adoption agency for all delegated adoption responsibilities. Any issue that may affect the prospective adopter's ability to provide a safe and nurturing home for a child is fully explored. This process is conducted in a transparent and professional manner that fully involves the prospective adopters.

Complaints to the agency are rare. When a complaint is received, it is addressed within the agency's complaints procedure timescales. A comprehensive response to the complaint is sent to the complainant. Learning for the agency and the regional adoption agency was identified in the two complaints that the inspector scrutinised. An action plan to address this learning is in place and continues to be embedded.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Since November 2018, when the agency was registered, it has been consistently led and managed. The registered manager is highly experienced manager who has outstanding knowledge of adoption in social care.

Staff in the adoption team are passionate about their work and aspirational for the agency. Staff said that they enjoy their work, which is shown by how long some have worked for the agency. The team is forward-thinking and creative. The inspector found evidence of excellent practice in the staff team, supported by the manager.

The manager's advocacy and challenge to decision-making is impressive. For example, the manager secured a substantial financial support package for an adopter. By doing this, two brothers were able to continue to live with their adoptive parent in a property that met their needs.

The agency benefits from strong governance and monitoring systems. The manager and responsible individual routinely compile extensive monitoring reports. An improvement plan is regularly updated and is child centred. These varied systems support their monitoring of the agency in terms of their responsibilities to the local authority and the relationship with the regional adoption agency. This gives excellent strategic oversight.

Feedback from adopters and professionals was overwhelmingly positive. This included praise for the work of the staff, who were described as being 'professional, caring and supportive'.

Leaders and managers have a clear understanding of the strengths of the agency and the areas they wish to develop further or to improve. They act promptly to analyse, evaluate and implement any learning. The manager has taken effective action to address the two complaints thoroughly. They have taken the learning from the investigations to make continued improvements to the agency. They use this learning to inform future practice.

The agency decision-maker maintains a rigorous quality assurance function and makes appropriate challenges to panel. The panel chair told the inspector that the child permanence reports provided to panel are of a high standard.

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: 2509643

Registered provider: Brighter Futures for Children Limited

Registered provider address: Reading BC, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading, Berkshire RG1 2LU

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Inspector

Linda Bond, Social Care Inspector

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