

Jigsaw Adoption

Jigsaw Adoption Limited

Fanshaw, Thame OX9 3ER

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this voluntary adoption agency

This agency was registered with Ofsted on 11 August 2015 and operates solely from the premises in Thame.

The agency currently recruits, prepares, assesses and approves applicants to adopt; provides support to their approved adopters to find children; supports their adopters and local authorities during the matching and placement processes; and supports families when children have been placed.

At the time of the inspection the agency was assessing 14 adoptive households; four households were approved and seeking a match with children; seven households had children placed with them; and the agency was also supporting two adoptive families post adoption order.

Inspection dates: 6 to 10 March 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 good

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

Date of previous inspection: 11 June 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of service users: good

The agency is a small organisation offering a personalised service to prospective adopters. Many adopters say that this was a factor in their decision to pursue adoption through the agency. Adopters are initially welcomed in person by the manager, who they describe as warm and empathetic and they say helped put them at ease. Adopters say that through the matching process the manager got to know them well and went above and beyond for them.

Adopters are well prepared to meet the needs of children for whom adoption is their route to permanence. There is effective training of prospective adopters during stage one of the process. Multiple resources are used to vary the learning experience. Adopters told inspectors that training is of a good standard and they felt better equipped to meet the needs of the children joining their family.

The agency places a strong emphasis on prospective adopters' learning during stage one of the adoption process. There is an expectation that they will undertake voluntary work with children to evidence their commitment to the process and gain valuable experience to evidence their childcare skills. In a number of cases, this has led to a significant delay in meeting the stage one timescales. While the agency has a clear rationale for this practice being child-focused, they do not detail the reason for any delay on the applicants' records.

Adopters feel well supported during the matching and introduction period. Many adopters reported on the care and expertise of their supporting social worker during this important phase of the process.

Support offered to adopters routinely includes helping the families access appropriate universal and specialist support services. For example, a child's therapeutic needs were only identified once they joined the adoptive family. The social worker aided the referral to family psychology services to access a therapeutic parenting course.

The agency promotes the importance of maintaining children's significant relationships once they join their adoptive families.

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

There have been no safeguarding incidents since the last inspection. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place for staff. There is a specific policy for adopters to help keep children safe when they move into the family home.

Reflective learning for adopters takes place with their assessing social worker in stage two of the process. In some cases, learning often extends to the adopters'

wider network, who are given the opportunity to receive bespoke training for friends and family.

There have been few incidents in the agency, with two since registration and one in this inspection period. The agency has worked to ensure there is learning from this incident. They have put measures in place to improve practice, including the processes in stage one. For example, in addition to carrying out more robust checks on references, they also ask adopters to provide information on key people in their network who can provide hands-on support once children join the family.

Although the agency does not provide direct post-adoption support, they help adopters navigate the support to which they are entitled and advocate on their behalf when necessary. The agency has produced a colourful children's guide to adoption support services explaining the kind of support they may wish to access in the future.

Social workers work with adopters in a supportive and respectful way. Adopters feel valued and listened to. When a match is identified, extra care is taken to review the support package being offered to ensure it meets the children's needs. Social workers offer significant support once children join the family. They provide adopters with advice and guidance, including understanding and managing behaviours and how to parent therapeutically.

Adopters' background checks and overseas checks are completed in line with regulations.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers have addressed all the requirements and recommendations made at the previous inspection. This includes the manager having undertaken and completed specific training in managing an adoption service.

The agency strives to set up adoptive placements which allow siblings to remain together. They have successfully arranged the placement of a number of sibling groups and provide effective support to ensure the success of these placements. Leaders and managers are ambitious to develop this work and understand the importance for children to remain together.

Leaders and managers place importance on gaining feedback from adopters and evaluating this to develop their understanding of the adopter experience. In addition, data is analysed annually to look for patterns and trends in prospective adopters' completion of the stages of the process, to further knowledge of why adopters may not progress to assessment.

Inspectors found appraisals of the responsible individual to be undertaken by the manager and panel chair for whom the responsible individual has direct line management and appraisal responsibility.

During the inspection, the agency decision-maker confirmed they had observed panel for the purpose of appraising the panel chair, however, they were not noted as an observer in the panel minutes.

Social workers receive supervision that is reflective, and this allows the managers to have oversight of the assessment of prospective adopters. However, records are not signed by the supervisor or the social worker.

Inspectors found the prospective adopters' reports are being signed by the manager, who is not a qualified social worker, which is recommended under the adoption guidance.

Social workers report feeling well supported by the manager and responsible individual, who make themselves readily available to staff. The induction of new staff is comprehensive, and the social workers said it had helped their learning and understanding of their role within the agency.

Leaders and managers have good oversight of staff training. The agency provides opportunities for the team to meet together for reflective learning.

There has been one complaint in this inspection period. The investigator followed the complaints procedure appropriately and reported their findings in full. Where aspects of the complaint were upheld, practice has been changed in response.

There is a current statement of purpose on the agency's website. However, this has not been sent to the regulator. This was rectified during the inspection.

What does the voluntary adoption agency need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when reports are being prepared by independent social workers or social workers who do not have the necessary experience, the draft report should be considered and discussed during supervision and signed off by a social worker with the necessary experience before the report is submitted to the adoption panel, another agency, or the court. (Statutory adoption guidance July 2013, paragraph 1.16)
- The registered person should ensure that the agency's decision-maker reviews the performance of the panel chair, and for this purpose may attend a proportion of panel meetings but only as an observer, which should be noted in the minutes. Views about the chair's performance should be sought from other panel members, and from those who attend panel meetings, such as prospective adopters and social workers. The agency adviser to the panel and the panel chair should conduct the performance review of those individuals on the central list. (Statutory adoption guidance July 2013, paragraph 1.35)
- The registered person should ensure that stage one should take no more than two months unless the agency is satisfied there are good reasons for it to take longer. Where it is clear that stage one will take longer than two months, for example, because a criminal record check is delayed or the prospective adopter wants more time (they might be struggling with the process or have a significant event such as a family bereavement), an agency may delay making their pre-assessment decision. In this case, agencies should detail the reasons for the extended timescale on the prospective adopter's case record, along with supporting evidence. This information is important given that performance on the timeliness of the approval process will be measured. (Statutory adoption guidance July 2013, paragraph 3.42)
- The registered person should ensure suitable arrangements exist for professional supervision and appraisal of managers and the registered person of the agency. (Adoption: national minimum standards, paragraph 24.3)
- The registered person should ensure 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 is signed by the supervisor and the member of staff at the end of the supervision. (Adoption: national minimum standards, paragraph 24.5)

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: SC489014

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Inspectors

Katie Ratcliffe, Social Care Inspector

Vevene Muhammad, Social Care Inspector

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