

An Independent Social Work/Play Therapy Service

1 Beacon Mews, South Road, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 9DZ

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this adoption support agency

This is a small agency operated by a sole practitioner based in Surrey. The agency has been registered since 2006. It provides therapeutic life-story work and adoption support to children, their parents and adopted adults through the use of therapies such as eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing, and play therapy.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since June 2006.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2023

Overall experience and progress of service users, taking into account	good
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How well children, young people and adults are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The adoption support agency provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 12 March 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgement

Overall experiences and progress of service users: good

The support for children, their parents and adults who use the service is consistent and there are aspects of exceptional practice. There are, however, some shortfalls in management oversight.

The agency consistently provides children and families with non-judgmental, inclusive and effective adoption support. Trusting relationships are built with children and adults, who say they feel safe and emotionally held. One young person described how the agency had helped them 'every step of the way' during their difficult journey.

Therapeutic life-story work is researched and delivered in creative ways. This helps children understand their personal history. For example, children use coloured sticky notes to identify what is important to help them feel safe and secure. Using the analogy of a brick wall, these denote bricks to represent their life with their birth parents and their life now. This work helps the children feel settled and safe in their adoptive family.

Children and families value the wraparound support they receive. They refer to the registered manager as being someone who really cares about them and is interested in them as a family. As a result of the therapeutic work carried out, the families are stronger and more resilient.

The agency works effectively with other professionals, providing additional resources and support. On occasion, the registered manager has engaged directly with children's schools to help teachers have a better understanding of adoption and the impact of early years trauma on individual children.

Some local authorities commission the agency to deliver staff training and pre-adoption and post-adoption training for adopters. This is well received. One local authority adoption worker spoke about the excellent training, which had inspired and informed their practice.

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

The agency understands its core safeguarding responsibilities. Any concerns about children's welfare have been appropriately shared with partner agencies. The registered manager successfully challenged a partner agency who did not respond effectively to concerns regarding a child's mental health. This ensured the child, and their family, received access to the help and support they needed.

Some families continue to face challenges, but they know the agency is always there to help them. The registered manager provides solution-focused helpful tips and

strategies to families. This helps families prevent or manage difficult situations. One parent described how the support they had received as a family had helped them move from a position of 'feeling they were always walking a tightrope, to a family which now felt it was on solid ground'. One professional said, 'It almost seemed as if there was a magic wand here.'

As a result of the high-quality adoption support, children and adults increase in confidence, self-worth and self-care. They are better able to see positives in life and manage the challenges of daily family life.

The direct work provided by the agency helps children and young people to better understand how their past experiences continue to affect the choices they make. For instance, they become more aware of and are better at identifying positive relationships and those which place them at risk of grooming. This helps keep children and young people safe. One parent said, 'It is like we have a different child. They have really come through it alright.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is skilled, experienced and knowledgeable in the field of adoption. She is empathetic and has a strong understanding of the challenges faced by children and families. However, she has not completed a suitable management qualification. Furthermore, she does not fully understand the regulations and standards regarding the management of an adoption support agency. Consequently, on occasion, some management aspects of the service are not delivered with the same rigour that is applied to the direct work with children and families.

The registered manager is passionate about her work. She keeps up to date with research and developments in the field of adoption. She has published children's books to help families support their children in understanding adoption.

Children and families using the service feel well supported. The registered manager is highly accessible to children, families and the professionals who support them. Consequently, they hold her, as the therapist, in high esteem.

The registered manager maintains good oversight of the therapeutic services. Progress and work with children and families is kept under regular review. This is monitored through goal-based outcomes.

The registered manager has recently reviewed the agency statement of purpose and placed an updated copy on the agency website. However, no statement of purpose has been submitted to Ofsted since 2015. As a result, the regulator has not had an up-to-date understanding of the agency and the services offered. The agency website contains merged details of this agency, as a registered agency with an outstanding grading, and another adoption support agency operated by the provider. The provider did make some small amendments during the inspection. However, the website remains confusing and potentially misleading for people who commission adoption support services.

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. (Regulation 6 (a)(b))</p>	9 May 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that they enrol on a management training course within six months and obtain a relevant management qualification within three years of appointment. (NMS 19.4)

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: SC066883

Registered provider: Carol Platteuw

Registered provider address: 1 Beacon Mews, South Road, Weybridge, Surrey
KT13 9DZ

Responsible individual: Carol Platteuw

Registered manager: Carol Platteuw

Telephone number: 01932 829 587

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Inspector

Joanna Heller, Social Care Inspector

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