

# Joanna North Associates

Joanna North (Associates) Limited

28 Marsh Street, Rothwell, Leeds LS26 0BB

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this adoption support agency

Joanna North (Associates) is an adoption support agency which offers adoption tracing and intermediary services and birth records counselling services for adults affected by adoption. The agency employs four permanent members of staff and three sessional members of staff. In the past 12 months, the agency has provided support to 173 adults.

### Inspection date: 27 June 2023

**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:** 18 April 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Inspection judgement

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

The agency provides a highly individualised and specialised service to adults, their families and descendants who want access to their birth records. The agency also offers support in tracing and meeting birth or adopted relatives.

Adults who approach the agency receive a prompt response to their enquiry. Service users receive an extremely welcoming approach, which helps them to make an informed decision about how they want to proceed. This is because staff manage expectations well and sensitively help service users to understand that their wishes may not be fulfilled. This careful preparation ensures that service users consider several possible eventualities, including receiving disappointing or sad news.

The agency forges positive relationships with service users and works well with agencies that it has links with. The agency often liaises with other adoption agencies or adoption support agencies to find information or to trace other family members. This effective partnership working ensures that service users receive a good service.

The agency monitors the quality of work by seeking the views of people who have used the agency and has developed systems for obtaining feedback. Feedback received is positive, and service users are satisfied with the service that they receive. One service user said:

'This is the most wonderful thing to happen in my life. It has completed me as a person. People comment on what a change there has been in me. The agency has been absolutely amazing.'

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

Staff have a good understanding and knowledge of the issues that can affect people who have been involved in adoption and the complexity of this work. This means that the physical and emotional well-being of the agency's service users are given a high priority. Careful checks on the identities of possible family members are carried out before this information is shared. The agency obtains consent from all parties before disclosing any contact details, which ensures that all parties are safeguarded.

Staff are skilled in helping people to understand the events that happened to them and past decisions that were made about their lives. All work is carefully carried out at the service user's pace. Staff are sensitive and provide a caring approach to help service users manage this information and offer counselling if this is required. When contact is made between adopted adults and their birth relatives, the agency's staff provide very good practical and emotional support to ensure the safety and well-

being of everyone. This helps service users to feel safe while going through this complex journey.

Complaints to the agency are minimal. The agency has appropriate policies for managing and responding to complaints and allegations. The agency ensures that staff who are employed are safely recruited. This means that all staff are assessed as suitable to work with vulnerable service users.

Staff have a clear understanding of the effects of historic abuse on children and how to safeguard vulnerable adults effectively. Safeguarding cases are reviewed and tracked regularly. However, the safeguarding policies have not been reviewed since 2020 and require updating to reflect current practice.

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

The registered manager is new in post. She is supported by a strong management team. Leaders and managers are dedicated and committed to ensure that service users receive the best possible service. Leaders and managers are not deterred by setbacks and difficulties when researching family histories for the intermediary service. The small staff team works tenaciously searching for information to provide to families. This commitment means that service users receive a consistently good service.

The agency has robust arrangements in place to ensure that records are maintained, retained and accessible. Each service user has a case record which includes comprehensive information about contact with the agency and the actions taken. Record-keeping is guided by policies and procedures which cover recording, confidentiality and storage.

The registered manager has effective monitoring systems in place for most agency activities, which gives her a strong understanding of the quality of the service. Staff who are employed on a contracted basis feel equally supported as their permanent colleagues. However, formal supervision has not been consistent. This does not provide all staff with opportunities to discuss and reflect on their practice.

The agency's statement of purpose, although updated recently, still contains information which is no longer relevant. This means that service users are not provided with accurate information about the agency and the services it offers.

## What does the adoption support agency need to do to improve?

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered persons 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 persons 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. (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>	<p>18 August 2023</p>

### Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all staff’s work and activity are consistent with adoption regulations and national minimum standards and with the service’s policies and procedures. (‘Adoption: national minimum standards’, page 72, paragraph 25.3)
- The registered person should ensure that staff receive regular supervision from an appropriately qualified and experienced person. (‘Adoption: national minimum standards’, page 75, paragraph 26.1)

### 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:** SC067674

**Registered provider:** Joanna North (Associates) Limited

**Registered provider address:** 28 Marsh Street, Rothwell, Leeds LS26 0BB

**Responsible individual:** Ryan Shaw

**Registered manager:** Alison Schofield

**Telephone number:** 0113 436 3610

**Email address:** ryan@joannanorth.co.uk

## **Inspectors**

Evelyn Chafota, Social Care Inspector  
Tina Ruffles, Regulatory Inspection Manager

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