

Diagrama Adoption

Diagrama Children's Services Limited

Airport House, Purley Way CR0 0XZ

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this voluntary adoption agency

The provider is a registered charity which operates services across Europe and the UK. The agency provides the full range of domestic adoption services, including access to records. At the time of this inspection, there were 43 families approved as adopters with 17 children placed but not yet adopted.

The registered manager has been in post since 2022.

Inspection dates: 11 to 15 March 2024

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: 8 October 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of service users: good

The quality of individualised care and support provided by the agency is good. All external professionals spoken to are positive about the support provided from the agency to adopters and children. Children are supported to a high standard to make progress.

The overall quality of relationships between professionals and prospective adopters and children is good. Most adopters say that they have felt well supported and informed throughout the adoption journey. Many adopters fed back that they would recommend this agency to other prospective adopters.

Adopters are prepared and supported to ensure that they have a holistic overview of their children's needs. The agency supports families to a high standard in promoting children's progress in relation to their health, education and emotional well-being, both pre and post placement. Where specialised support is needed, the agency is proactive in advocating on behalf of children and their families to resource this.

Children's views are understood. Social workers in the agency work with children to ensure that their views are heard and considered in assessments. It is positive to see that creative and innovative work is carried out with children. Children and adopters provide positive feedback about the social workers in the agency and the relationships they have built through ongoing work.

Overall, adopters have felt welcomed by the agency. Most adopters have had positive experiences of the adoption assessment process. Complaints are rare for this agency. However, when a complaint has been received, the response has been professional and in line with policies and procedures. The agency places emphasis on learning from complaints. However, some learning has not yet been fully embedded into practice. There are clear plans in place to address this.

The offer of adoption support from the agency is good. There is a duty line for adopters at any stage of the process to contact the agency for support. There are online support groups and specialised training programmes available. Alongside this, family fun day events are organised several times per year and are well attended. Feedback from these events from adopters and children is overall positive.

The access to records service is a strength in this agency and has developed significantly since the previous inspection. Those wanting a service are not having to wait long. Individual expectations on what service is within remit are realistic and sensitive. The members of staff dedicated to this service are passionate and committed to providing the best possible service for those seeking information about their historical records.

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

Safeguarding practice in the agency is good. Prospective adopters are prepared and supported to understand the impact of abuse and neglect throughout all stages of their journey with this agency. Training for adopters is informative and detailed to ensure that they are realistically informed around the impact of trauma and loss on children.

Staff are quick to respond to safeguarding concerns. They work collaboratively with families and professionals to ensure that practice is child focused and safeguarding of children is prioritised. The agency will actively and professionally challenge responses from others if children are considered to continue to be at risk. Staff are not afraid to escalate safeguarding concerns. This keeps children safe.

Safer recruitment processes for staff and panel members are thorough. All necessary statutory checks are carried out. The checks are monitored and kept under review.

Overall, the safeguarding checks of adopters are thorough. Where checks have not been carried out sufficiently in the earlier stages, these have been identified before approval through quality assurance processes. The agency wants to continue to learn from this and now has a dedicated worker overseeing stage one to tighten this. This is positive and will enhance safeguarding practice further.

The panel is very experienced and diverse. Panel members offer a good level of scrutiny in response to the quality of assessments presented. They are assertive in ensuring that any areas for further development are identified, even if this means deferrals for additional work. This ensures that only suitable and well-prepared applicants are approved to be matched with vulnerable children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is supported by a dedicated team of managers who are effective and positive role models for their agency. Staff feel well supported by this senior leadership team, who they describe as 'empathetic' and 'supportive'.

Leaders and managers have ambitions and high expectations for what all children can achieve. The emphasis of this agency is ensuring that it has excellent adopters who understand each child's individual journey throughout the adoption process and how they can meet their needs. There is a culture of quality as opposed to quantity, which is embedded across the agency. The agency is child focused across all aspects of its service.

Staff morale is high. Staff feedback is positive about the support in the team and from managers and leaders. Some staff describe working in the agency as 'family like'. The staff team is currently stable. Staff say they stay due to the culture of the agency. This is positive. One staff member said, 'I feel valued by my employers and

managers and believe this has enabled me to provide a better quality of assessment and support to the families I work with. It is also the basis of a stable team.'

There is a good offer of training and development for the staff team. Training is offered internally and externally. The agency will go to experts in the field to fund specific training for the staff team relevant to their work. Where staff have had bespoke training, this is dissipated to the whole team during regular lunch-and-learn sessions.

Appraisals are consistently taking place within relevant time frames for the whole staff team. There is a 360 approach, which includes feedback from adopters and children. This is excellent practice to feed into practitioners' ongoing development.

Staff receive regular and good-quality supervision from managers. The supervision is recorded and signed, to cover all aspects of their role. However, while the registered manager has regular supervision, this is not recorded. Without a record of this discussion, there is no clear evidence of monitoring the registered manager's development or conduct across the service.

The manager's monitoring and oversight of practice are overall good. However, there have been some minor recording issues identified across the inspection. While most adopters have reported very positive experiences with this agency, some have fed back that dependent on whether their allocated social worker is independent or permanent has had some impact. The agency is aware of shortfalls identified and is reviewing how it can improve the monitoring and oversight of all social workers' practice across all stages. However, this is an ongoing area of development for the agency.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the agency keeps a written record of the time, date and duration of each supervision session held for each member of staff, including the registered manager. The record should be signed by the supervisor and the member of staff at the end of the session. ('Adoption: national minimum standards', paragraph 24.5)
- The registered person should ensure that the manager regularly monitors all records kept by the agency to ensure compliance with the agency's policies, to identify any concerns about specific incidents and to identify patterns and trends. Immediate action should be taken to address any issues raised by this monitoring. ('Adoption: national minimum standards', paragraph 25.2)

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: SC484605

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