



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## ADOPTION SUPPORT AGENCIES

### **After Adoption Yorkshire**

**31 Moor Road  
Headingley  
Leeds  
LS6 4BG**

*Lead Inspector*  
**Sean White**

*Announced Inspection*  
**8th September 2006      09:30**

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this service are those for *Adoption Support Agencies*. They can be found at [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk) or obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: [www.tso.co.uk/bookshop](http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop)

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# SERVICE INFORMATION

<b>Name of service</b>	After Adoption Yorkshire
<b>Address</b>	31 Moor Road Headingley Leeds LS6 4BG
<b>Telephone number</b>	0113 278 6487
<b>Fax number</b>	0113 278 6050
<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Provider Web address</b>	
<b>Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)</b>	After Adoption Yorkshire
<b>Name of registered manager (if applicable)</b>	Lyndsey Mary Marshall
<b>Type of registration</b>	Adoption Support Agency

# SERVICE INFORMATION

## Conditions of registration:

1. To provide services to Adults and Children
2. In addition they can offer birth records counselling and intermediary services

**Date of last inspection** N/A

## Brief Description of the Service:

After Adoption Yorkshire was established in 1994; it is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. Its main office is located in a residential suburb on the outskirts of Leeds with a sub-office in Hull; the agency also rents premises in various locations across Yorkshire from which it conducts its outreach functions.

The agency is registered to undertake a range of adoption support functions – to both adults and children – whose lives have been touched or affected by adoption. These include:

- Telephone advice line.
- Confidential advice, support, counselling, mediation and befriending services for adopted people, adoptive parents and birth families.
- Birth records counselling.
- Direct work with adopted children.
- Support groups for adopted people.
- Search service to assist those wishing to trace birth and adopted relatives.
- A mediation advice and support service.
- Mentoring and buddy support schemes.
- Consultation and training for professionals.
- Workshops and seminars.
- Assistance where disruption of an adoption placement is in danger of occurring or has occurred including mediation services and running disruption meetings.

The agency is managed by a Board of Trustees and a registered manager; it is staffed by full and part time workers, sessional workers and volunteers.

# SUMMARY

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

The inspection was carried out over three days by two inspectors. The agency prepared well for the inspection and all required information was provided in an efficient and timely way. The managers, staff and service users were cooperative and helpful throughout the visit; this was greatly appreciated and enabled a productive inspection to be carried out.

During the course of the visit the following was carried out:

- Interview with Chair of Board of Trustees.
- Interview with registered manager.
- Group interview with agency workers.
- Interview with senior administrator/finance officer.
- Group interview with administrative staff.
- Interview with external supervisor.
- Interview with sessional worker.
- Interviews with eight service users (separately).
- Inspection of premises (Leeds) and one outreach base, and security.
- Reading policies, procedures and required documentation.
- Reading case files.
- Collation of survey questionnaires as follows:
  - Adult service users – 14
  - Children service users - 2
  - Referring agencies - 5
  - Agency staff - 20

## **What the service does well:**

This is an adoption support agency that takes its work and responsibilities very seriously and provides very good services in many areas. It is committed to service users needs being at the centre of its operations and to ensuring that they are in control of their own direction and purpose. The statement of purpose, backed up by policies and procedures relevant to its work, states clearly the range of services available and how the agency aims to fulfil its obligations to service users.

The underpinning ethos of the agency clearly demonstrated that service users can expect to receive a support service that is relevant to their needs and delivered in a way that is safe and in a manner that protects and promotes their welfare. Policies and procedures demonstrated this and service users comments confirmed it. One person said, for instance, "They work with the whole person, in a way that makes you feel comfortable".

The agency's approach to ensuring that the support provided is appropriate to meet the needs of service users is very carefully considered; people in receipt

of support are viewed as the driving force of provision and their needs as paramount. There was effusive praise from people who responded to a questionnaire survey – and from people interviewed – for the way in which the agency approached service provision and tailored support to meet people’s needs and expectations. “AAY has done more to help me achieve my aim than any other body” and “I was very nervous but they were very sensitive to what I wanted them to help me with”, being typical comments made.

Very skilled and experienced practitioners and volunteers who are committed to the principles and expectations of the service staff the agency. They demonstrated a high level of competence, knowledge and professionalism and are clearly well motivated. Service users were unanimous in their praise of the workers and clearly more than satisfied with the support with which they had been provided. Examples of extensive tributes being, “Had the most fantastic service” and “Tremendously helpful” and “I was very impressed with their professionalism and approach to confidentiality”. There was also all round satisfaction demonstrated by referring agencies in respect of the quality of services provided.

The management of the agency is of a high standard. It has a Board of Trustees that has been strengthened in recent times by the appointment of members with relevant and necessary skills and expertise; the chairperson is a very experienced person with a wide knowledge of social care and experience of adoption matters. The fully qualified registered manager is from a social care and children’s services background with extensive experience of management. There is a solid, professional relationship between the board and manager and together they provide for a very well managed service that is committed to providing workers with a framework of support, guidance and training that clearly benefits the support provision available to service users. The management structure and lines of accountability and communication were clear and staff felt that they worked for an organisation that was motivated to deliver best practice and outcomes; it was evident that they valued the quality and availability of management support, and felt trusted and valued as workers. This is clearly a well-motivated service that has a robust strategic direction and efficiently managed operations. This includes the well resourced administrative infrastructure, which again had many positive comments made about it by service users; “friendly and efficient”, said one, “well organised” said another.

The quality and availability of training is of a particularly high standard and workers were appreciative of the opportunities for professional development. This clearly has a knock-on effect on service provision – and subsequently acknowledged by service users; “they sure knew what they were talking about” being one statement made.

Overall, this is a highly motivated, well managed professional agency that understands its role and responsibilities and undertakes them sensitively with commitment, knowledge and skill.

## **What has improved since the last inspection?**

This was the first inspection of the agency.

## **What they could do better:**

The issues that the agency should address are generally in matters of detail - and the manager, in her self-assessment, had identified most of these already.

The children's guide to the service was only in draft form at the time of the inspection and not publicly available. This needs to be finalised as soon as possible.

The child protection procedure should be more explicit on the processes for dealing with allegations of historical abuse.

Case recording, although good or very good in some files, was not so well presented in others. Workers' approach to style and content should be more consistent. Similarly, the evidence of initial assessments of need was also inconsistent and needs to be improved in some cases.

Whilst training is of a very good quality overall, it would be beneficial for there to be some consideration given to arranging input in group work dynamics and techniques for those with limited experience in this area.

Clearer systems for recording the process of the recruitment of workers and more details in respect of CRB checks should be considered.

Please contact the provider for advice of actions taken in response to this inspection.

The report of this inspection is available from [enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk) or by contacting your local CSCI office.

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

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# Statement Of Purpose

## The intended outcome for Standard 1 is:

There is a clear written statement of the aims and objectives of the adoption support agency and the agency ensures that it meets those aims and objectives

- 1 Statement of purpose

## JUDGEMENT

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The agency has a clear statement of purpose that enables people to understand the service, its aims & objectives and what it provides. The children's guides, which are almost complete, will enable children to understand what the agency is and does.

## EVIDENCE:

The Statement of Purpose is a clearly laid out document that sets out the history, aims and objectives of the agency; it provides full details of the services provided, how complaints can be made, organisational and staffing structures, and details the monitoring and quality assurance systems. It is written in plain English and includes all the information required by regulations and standards. The statement is available to all staff, referring agencies and service users.

The operation of the agency, as informed and directed by policies and procedures, was found to be a true reflection of the statement of purpose and it was evident that the service strives to maintain its commitment to its underpinning principles and aims.

Two children's guides have been produced – one for those who are 11 years and older, one for those children under 11 years of age. At the time of the inspection these were only in draft form and were not publicly available. Both documents were of an appropriate standard and provided relevant information about the agency. Nevertheless, the agency should ensure that these guides are completed as soon as possible and published.

# Safeguarding And Promoting Welfare

## The intended outcome for Standard 2 is:

The adoption support agency safeguards and promotes the physical, mental and emotional welfare of people affected by adoption who wish to use its services.

### 2 Safeguarding and promoting welfare

## JUDGEMENT

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The agency has a strong commitment to protecting people and promoting their welfare, and this was seen in practice. However, there was some lack of detail in protection procedures that may compromise this to some degree.

## EVIDENCE:

It was clear that the agency places a high priority on ensuring that service-users are protected from any form of abuse, so far as it is possible. This was evident in discussions with service users, in the aims, objectives and underlying principles of the service, and in its practices - as noted from discussions with workers and in case recording.

Service users said that they were provided with support in a safe setting and they reported full trust in workers' commitment to safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Comments in children's questionnaires stated full trust and confidence in agency workers. The agency has produced a leaflet that provides service users with details of the agency's commitment to protection, promoting welfare and confidentiality, and it has a satisfactory protection policy and procedure in respect of vulnerable adults.

There is a Child Protection Policy and procedure that has been produced in line with local safeguarding boards and, in the main, provides a comprehensive outline of how workers will proceed in the event of allegations or suspicions of abuse. However, although the policy makes reference to its commitment to dealing with issues of historical abuse, it was not sufficiently robust in outlining

how such allegations or disclosures should be managed. This should be re-written to provide clearer procedural guidance. There also needs to be clearer recording in case files in respect of steps taken when allegations have been made. These issues are particularly important given that many of the agency's volunteers are not qualified social workers.

Nevertheless, it was evident through discussions with workers and volunteers that there is a significant commitment to protecting people - and it was clear that there was considerable knowledge of protection procedures within the workforce. Child protection takes a high priority in the induction process for new staff and further training has been provided.

# User Focused Services

## The intended outcome for Standard 3 is:

People affected by adoption receive a service from the adoption support agency that is appropriate and tailored to their particular need. They are treated fairly, openly and with respect throughout their contact with the agency.

### 3 User-focused services

## JUDGEMENT

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The agency always provides services for people that are aimed at meeting the needs as expressed by service users - in a way that enables people to feel confident that support is tailored in an exclusive and personal way.

## EVIDENCE:

It was very clear from the outset – in the language used by managers and staff at the agency – that the services available are deployed in a way that are in the full control of the service user. The statement of purpose, and policies and procedures, confirmed this.

The responses in questionnaire surveys, and those from service users interviewed, were unanimous in stating that the services provided were appropriate to their needs and, more importantly, that they felt it was their needs that informed and directed the support provided. Several comments confirmed this, such as, “Considerate workers...led by our needs”, “...they asked how I felt and how they could help” and, “Went at my pace”.

It was evident that once contact had been made with the agency that service users are clear about the range of services that are available and how they could be deployed to help. This was evident in statements made by service users and in case recording. One person said, “It was very clear from the outset what they could do, they made it very personal and comfortable”.

Discussions with workers and volunteers demonstrated that they were fully committed to the principles of service users being in control of the support they provided and confirmed that this was the organisational ethos – and always had been.

The agency surveys its service users regularly; the information gained from these exercises can be used to inform and direct policy decisions or practice.

Workers were also clear that if they found situations where it was felt that the agency could not provide the support required then advice and assistance would be given for people to locate appropriate alternative services.

# Service Delivery

## The intended outcome for Standard 4 is:

The adoption support agency's service users receive a good-quality, professional service, based on their needs identified by an assessment.

### 4 Service delivery

## JUDGEMENT

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The agency provides high quality services that meet a wide range of needs in a professional and sensitive way; better recording of assessments would further improve an already impressive operation.

## EVIDENCE:

The statement of purpose and corresponding policies and procedures clearly identify the range of services provided by the agency – and how they should be delivered. It was clear that the skills and knowledge base is wide and pertinent to the services being provided and that deployment of activity is undertaken with due care and attention to the needs of service users and the abilities of workers.

Service users, through both questionnaire surveys and direct discussions, demonstrated a unanimous appreciation of the high quality of service provided for them. The comments received were unequivocal in their praise for the professionalism, knowledge, skills and sensitivity of workers; they also made clear their gratitude for the successful outcomes achieved as a result of the agency's involvement. Typical examples of service users comments were, "I credit AAY with keeping my family together", "I was impressed with the sensitive way my case was handled" and "Excellent service, very supportive, helpful and understanding". This is only a small selection of comments and the high level of satisfaction demonstrated by service users cannot be overstated.

There was also a corresponding level of satisfaction with the agency's performance from referring agencies (usually local authorities). Survey comments received included, "AAY provide excellent advocacy and support"

and “A highly professional, specialist service”. General comments also confirmed the agency’s positive approach to working in partnership.

Workers demonstrated a wide breadth of knowledge and expertise in adoption and support matters and it was evident that they are motivated to deliver best outcomes. They felt very strongly that the support and resources available in the agency helped them achieve this. The management input into the operational aspects of support provision was clearly knowledgeable and enabling; workers are well equipped by sensitive and professional ‘back-up’ to assist them in performing their duties.

The staff in AAY enjoyed positive working relationships with other LAA’s in the region. The agency ensured that service users were signposted to other services including psychotherapists and CAMHS when appropriate.

Evidence of the quality of the services provided in case files was a little patchy in places. Some case recording clearly outlined the services being provided and their progress; others were somewhat limited in the information being recorded. It was not always clear that an assessment of need had been undertaken – either by the agency or a local authority – and this is an area of development that the agency should pursue. The manager made it clear that case recording was an issue that she was making some progress with and it was clear that many improvements had been made, including a new, clearer referral document. Continuity with these efforts is encouraged.

# **Fitness To Provide Or Manage An Adoption Support Agency**

## **The intended outcomes for Standards 5 and 6 are:**

The adoption support agency is provided and managed by those who are suitable and have the appropriate skills and experience to do so effectively and efficiently to provide the services specified in the Statement of purpose

- 5 Skills to provide or manage
- 6 Suitability to carry on or manage

## **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

5, 6

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The management structure of the agency – Board of Trustees and registered manager – demonstrated that it was fit and suitable to provide adoption support services.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The chairperson of the Board of Trustees has wide experience of management and monitoring in both large and small organisations, including charities and local authorities; she also has significant experience in adoption matters. The Board has been strengthened in recent times to include members with backgrounds in social care, legal and financial matters, which has brought a breadth of knowledge and expertise that is relevant to the work of the agency. The Board exercises control and oversight of the agency in an appropriate manner.

The registered manager has wide experience of social care, children's services and adoption matters both as a practitioner and senior manager in local authority social services departments. She is a qualified social worker with a post-graduate management award (MBA) that is relevant to the work of the agency. The manager exceeded the requirements for registration when the organisation applied to be registered under the legislation that came into force on 31 December 2005.

# Management Of The Adoption Support Agency

## The intended outcomes for Standards 7 and 8 are:

The adoption support agency safeguards and promotes the physical, mental and emotional welfare of people affected by adoption who wish to use its services.

- 7 Managing effectively and efficiently
- 8 Monitoring and controlling

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

7, 8

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

There are effective management and monitoring arrangements in place to ensure that the agency is conducted appropriately.

## EVIDENCE:

The services provided by the agency are clearly aimed at achieving the best possible outcomes for service users by addressing and meeting their needs. It was evident that everyone in the organisation is committed to this principle and that the management input promoted and enabled best practice. As well as achieving the outcomes that were hoped for, the practices of the agency - as directed and informed by effective management, (and supported by service users' comments) people's emotional and mental wellbeing is protected and promoted. "Saved my marriage", said one, "We always felt comfortable, even when difficult situations arose", said another.

The manager demonstrated a significant understanding and knowledge of adoption support issues and is clearly well informed about current legislation in this area. The organisation of the agency's strategic and operational work was found to be efficient and considered, and it was evident that the workers felt they were managed in a supportive and enabling way; "...excellent leadership", said one.

The expectations of being a registered organisation under current legislation are taken very seriously by the manager. It was very clear that she had made a great effort to provide an honest quality assessment of the agency prior to

the inspection and understood the direction in which the service was headed – and the management issues she has to address at every stage of the process.

The manager also demonstrated effective and realistic oversight of the agency. Supervision and less formal support are regular and frequent and workers stated their satisfaction with the availability and quality of the support they received. Workers were also appreciative of the trust and confidence that the manager shows she has in them.

The arrangements for deputising in the absence of the manager (a nominated, experienced worker) were clear – and this is to be further enhanced by the appointment of an assistant manager in the very near future. This will enable the registered manager to develop further her strategic role – something that has become more difficult in recent times due to the time constraints placed on her position by the demands of operational matters.

The manager meets with the chair of the Board weekly and has access to it at its bi-monthly meetings. The overall operation of the agency is overseen and monitored by the Board and the manager produces a report to it on a quarterly basis. It was clear that the arrangements for ensuring the agency is conducted appropriately at all times were well established and appropriate; the Board is well informed about agency activity and exercises its monitoring role and responsibility fully and with commitment to providing the best possible services to people touched by adoption.

The chairperson of the Board wished to make it clear that they have an excellent treasurer and that this brings benefit to the arrangements in respect of funding and financial matters. There are clear and satisfactory systems in place to manage and monitor contracts and service level agreements with referring agencies.

# Employment And Management Of Staff And Volunteers

## The intended outcomes for Standards 9 to 14 are:

The staff and volunteers who work in the adoption support agency are suitable to work with the agency's service users and they are managed, trained and supported in such a way as to ensure the best possible outcomes for service users. The number of staff and volunteers and their range of qualifications and experience are sufficient to achieve the purposes and functions of the adoptions support agency.

- 9 Suitability to work with service users
- 10 Organisation and management of staff
- 11 Sufficient staff with the right skills and experience
- 12 Fair and competent employer
- 13 Training
- 14 Accountability and support

(These standards 9-14 do not apply where the registered provider is an individual and does not have staff or volunteers)

## **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The agency manages its staff well and in a way that enables best outcomes for service users to be achieved.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Workers and volunteers with a wide range of experience, qualifications and skills staff the agency; all have an interest in, and commitment to, adoption support. Most of the permanent employees are qualified social workers, as are many of the sessional workers and volunteers. There are effective recruitment and selection procedures in place, with all required checks carried out - and it was clear, from personnel records, that these are followed in every case; this ensures that service users are protected. Systems have been developed to ensure CRB checks are carried out every three years and the manager has a

system whereby she signs to show that written references have been verified. These systems would benefit from clearer, more detailed, recording.

The management of workers and volunteers was found to be a strong element in the delivery of services and it was evident that staff enjoyed a sound, supportive and encouraging infrastructure geared towards them performing to the best of their abilities. A more structured way of allocating work had been recently introduced which has provided for a more effective way of monitoring and controlling workloads. Allocation of cases was seen to be equitable and, despite people working very hard, workload management was effective and enabled people to undertake their duties realistically. The soon to be appointed assistant manager should further improve matters in this area.

Individual supervision is provided regularly and workers also felt confident that support and guidance was readily available whenever it was required or necessary. Group supervision is also provided frequently (by an external consultant) - which adds value to the skill development of all workers; this was reported as invaluable as a means of enabling workers to explore complex and difficult issues. Team meetings are held regularly.

It was noted that the level of work and referrals was rather high; workers are operating at the limits of their capacity and waiting lists for support are developing. Whilst it appeared that the service is able to cope with capacity at the moment - and matters should improve with the appointment of the assistant team manager - the agency should, nevertheless, continue to monitor its workload to ensure that responsibilities do not outweigh the ability to fulfil them.

Training and staff development are high priorities in this organisation. Workers have excellent opportunities to access training events and they are encouraged at all times to take advantage of these. Training that has been undertaken has been of a high standard and included specialist areas; the agency also runs its own training courses for other organisations, which are also available to its own workers. It was very clear that this is an agency strongly committed and motivated to training and skill development; this was reflected in workers' comments, such as, "excellent training opportunities" and "I've had more training since coming to AAY than any other organisation" and "High quality training". One area where the agency should concentrate future training should be in group-work; volunteers with little experience or background in this area of work would benefit from a sound grounding in group dynamics to feel more comfortable and confident when facilitating support groups.

The agency demonstrated it is a fair and competent employer through its management and support networks, the way it values and trusts its workers and volunteers and its motivation towards the personal and professional development of staff. Workers said that they felt valued and that they worked

for an organisation committed to providing the best possible services to people touched by adoption.

# Individual Practitioners

## The intended outcome for Standard 15 is:

The registered provider manages the agency effectively and efficiently and is suitable to work with the agency's service users. He or she is trained and supported in such a way as to ensure the best possible outcomes for service users.

15 Managing effectively and efficiently

(This standard only applies where the registered provider is an individual and does not have staff or volunteers)

## JUDGEMENT

## EVIDENCE:

This section does not apply to this agency.

# Complaints And Representations

## The intended outcome for Standard 16 is:

Complaints and representations are resolved quickly and handled in a sensitive, thorough and non-biased manner.

16 Complaints and representations

### **JUDGEMENT**

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence, including a visit to this service.

The agency's approach to complaints is thorough and robust which enables service users to feel confident that their concerns are appropriately addressed.

### **EVIDENCE:**

The agency has a complaints and complements policy and procedure that is made available to all workers, volunteers and service users. An information leaflet available to all service users and referring agencies supplements this and sets out clearly what avenues people can pursue; it is non-judgemental and does not restrict any areas. It maintains records of all complaints received and the investigations undertaken. Whilst it was clear that the agency takes complaints very seriously – and investigates them with thorough diligence – the recording of the processes involved could be improved to present the information in a more coherent manner.

All workers are aware of the complaints procedure, have been instructed in its operation and how to respond if a complaint is made.

## Records

### The intended outcomes for Standards 17 to 21 are:

All appropriate records are securely maintained, retained and are accessible when required.

- 17 Records with respect to services
- 18 Adoption case records
- 19 Access to adoption case records
- 20 Administrative records
- 21 Personnel files for members of staff and volunteers

### JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

17, 20, 21

Quality in this outcome area is adequate. This judgement has been made using available evidence, including a visit to this service.

The agency has sound administrative and recording practices in most areas, which enables it to be confident that the service is appropriately structured.

### EVIDENCE:

Each service user has a case record that is indexed and maintained in an appropriate format; this is a recently devised format that has improved the maintenance of case files. Similarly the content of case files has been improved in recent times; more detailed information is now recorded which makes for easier and more efficient monitoring to be undertaken. Some older files were not of the same standard as those in respect of more recent cases.

Case recording was found to be somewhat inconsistent in some of the files examined, however, and the manager should endeavour to encourage workers to write relevant, concise information that details cases in such a way that they can be fully understood by any reader or supervisor.

The administrative systems and record management were of a very good standard. All required records were in place, were stored appropriately and were protected from the risk of fire and flood – although the file storage area may benefit from a further smoke/heat detector to provide additional protection.

Electronically held information is backed up regularly to a remote server and the agency has devised a disaster recovery plan that is appropriate for the service.

The records that the agency maintains in respect of workers and volunteers were generally good. They included all required information and demonstrated effective recruitment practices. Some changes to how information is recorded would improve the personnel files and CRB records; this could be in the form of a front sheet that records the recruitment process from beginning to end; records concerning annual appraisal should also be kept more consistently.

# **Fitness Of Premises**

## **The intended outcome for Standard 22 is:**

The premises used by the adoption support agency are suitable for the purpose of providing the services as set out in the agency's statement of purpose.

22 Fitness of premises

## **JUDGEMENT**

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The agency has reasonable facilities overall enabling service users to have comfortable experiences and in which workers can work reasonably comfortably.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The agency's main office is located in a residential suburb of Leeds. It has parking facilities and is reasonably accessible by public transport; although it is located on the first floor, a stair lift has been installed to enable people with a disability to gain access. There is also a satellite office that serves the Hull/Humberside area but these premises were not inspected. In addition the agency uses facilities in several areas across the Yorkshire region.

Although space is at a premium in the main office, the facilities are pleasant and working conditions adequate. Nevertheless, as the organisation grows it will require more spacious premises and this is an area that the manager and the Board are actively pursuing. Comments made by service users were generally complementary about the premises and facilities provided. The outreach facility that was inspected was found to be appropriate for its purpose and comfortable for use by service users.

The building is appropriately secured, has satisfactory fire detection systems in place and the agency has adequate insurance cover.

There are good (new) IT resources and the systems in place to safeguard and protect confidential, electronic, information are satisfactory. As already indicated in the previous section, there is a disaster recovery plan in place.

# Financial Requirements

## The intended outcomes for Standards 23 and 24 are:

The adoption support agency is financially viable

- 23 Financial viability
- 24 Financial processes

## **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

23, 24

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The financial arrangements were of a good standard enabling the agency to fulfil its responsibilities efficiently and effectively.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The chairperson of the Board assured that the agency was financially viable and maintained reserves in excess of those required by the Charity Commission. The agency accounts are regularly audited by external accountants.

There are financial systems in place to ensure that business is conducted within the agency's capabilities. The Treasurer, as already indicated earlier in this report was said to be of a very high calibre and conducted the financial business of the agency very well.

In addition to this there is a senior administrator/finance officer in the agency whose responsibility it is to manage the service's financial systems. The administration of financial matters, including contractual arrangements with referring agencies was of a good standard.

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Adoption have been met and uses the following scale.

**4** Standard Exceeded (Commendable)      **3** Standard Met (No Shortfalls)  
**2** Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls)      **1** Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

"X" in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion

"N/A" in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

<b>STATEMENT OF PURPOSE</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>

<b>SAFEGUARDING AND PROMOTING WELFARE</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

<b>USER FOCUSED SERVICES</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>

<b>SERVICE DELIVERY</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>

<b>FITNESS TO PROVIDE OR MANAGE AN ADOPTION SUPPORT AGENCY</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>

<b>MANAGEMENT OF THE ADOPTION SUPPORT AGENCY</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>

<b>EMPLOYMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>

<b>INDIVIDUAL PRACTITIONERS</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>15</b>	<b>N/A</b>

<b>COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATIONS</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>16</b>	<b>3</b>

<b>RECORDS</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>17</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>3</b>

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

## Continued

<b>FITNESS OF PREMISES</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>22</b>	<b>3</b>

<b>FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>23</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>3</b>

Are there any outstanding requirements from the last inspection? N/A

This was the first inspection of the agency.

**STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Adoption support regulations and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

No.	Standard	Regulation	Requirement	Timescale for action

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

These recommendations relate to National Minimum Standards and are seen as good practice for the Registered Provider/s to consider carrying out.

No.	Refer to Standard	Good Practice Recommendations
1	ADS1	The children’s guide should become published as soon as possible.
2	ADS2	The child protection policy should be more explicit in respect of allegations of historical abuse.
3	ADS17	Case recording should be more consistent.
4	ADS20	A clearer case recording policy should be produced to address recommendation no. 3 (above).

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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