

Placement Support

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Inspector	Rosie Dancer
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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Not judged: this aspect of the provision was not judged

Service Information

Brief description of the service

The agency works with children, their adopters, carers and the networks of professionals working with looked after children, including children placed for adoption and those in an adoptive placements. Interventions are grounded in the psychoanalytic tradition.

The agency applies psychodynamic ways of thinking to organisations and networks of professionals working with children. The aim is to promote more informed practice and understanding amongst carers and professionals about the emotional needs of children who are disturbed, traumatised or at risk; support to carers and the professional networks are seen as key to meeting the needs of the children.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding

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

This is an agency that provides an excellent service to children, their adopters and carers, and the professional networks involved with the family.

The assessments undertaken are extremely thorough and clear recommendations are made which form the basis of any work with families.

Due to the diverse needs of families and professionals needing a service it is essential that assessments are individualised and consider the needs of all parties. The agency achieves this exceptionally well and a flexible approach is taken in every case at the initial stages and during ongoing work; this ensures that needs are met at all points in time and the best chance of success is assured.

What the service does well

This is an agency that is managed and staffed very skilled therapists who have a wealth of experience in working with children, their families and the professional networks involved with them. The pieces of work that the agency takes on are usually amongst the most complex. Generally, other professionals have worked to achieve positive outcomes for the children but have been unsuccessful.

It is with great skill, sensitivity and judgement that the agency has been able to achieve some vastly improved outcomes for children. Work is at all times child focused but also maintains a focus on all involved with the child; this means that the professional networks involved and the adopters and carers, develop a shared understanding about the issues. This also allows a cohesive approach to be taken ensuring the best possible outcomes for children.

The therapists are extremely skilled at supporting all they work with through some very distressing and disruptive times. They do this, at all times, skilfully and in an empathetic and non-judgemental way; they really care for and about the people they work with.

The agency provides psychodynamic consultancy to families and to organisations and this work is invaluable in helping families best meet the needs of the children. It is also key in supporting professionals develop long-term plans for children that are likely to best meet their needs. The agency has great success in meeting its aim to improve the practice and understanding of adopters and carers and professionals working with children about the emotional needs of children who are disturbed, traumatised or at risk.

What has been improved since the last inspection

This is the first inspection since registration.

What they could do better

The updated safeguarding policy and procedure should be submitted to the local safeguarding children's board for comment when finalised.

What sort of service is it?

Statement of purpose

The provision is outstanding.

There is a Statement of Purpose that underpins the work of the agency and is available to all interested parties. There is also an informative website that interested parties can access. The website also details what work the agency carries out. This means that there is clear information for people with an interest in the service.

The agency, due to the diverse nature of the work, provides information that is individual to need and ensures that people using the service are fully involved in the development of plans and fully understand what is going to happen. The agency takes the time and energy to ensure that people fully understand the aims and objectives of the work. This open and transparent approach shows a high level of respect to all using the service. It means that people using the service are clear about the aims and objectives in respect to meeting their individual needs and feel that their views are valued.

Safeguarding and promoting welfare

The provision is good.

This agency has not had occasion to deal with any safeguarding concerns. There is a clear policy in the event of any safeguarding concerns arising and this has been recently updated in consultation with the local authority designated officer for safeguarding. The updated safeguarding policy and procedure document has not been submitted to the Local Safeguarding Children Board for comment. While a recommendation has been made the impact on children and others using the service is minimal as the manager and the director of the agency have a good awareness of and understanding about their responsibilities in light of any concerns arising.

User focused services

The provision is outstanding.

The agency carries out comprehensive assessment work with families and reaches recommendations, to local authorities and other agencies, about children's individual needs and how these can be met. The assessment work is of a high quality and a social worker said that the work had been, 'very insightful and provided an excellent picture of the children.' He also said of the work carried out that it was, 'brilliant, absolutely exceptional.'

It is through the work of the agency that children's emotional needs are established and their carers are supported in understanding their often negative behaviours. Carers are supported to think about the significance of their child/children's behaviours and the agency also supports the adopters and carers to help the child/children to stabilise emotionally. This in turn enables children to begin to form safe and secure attachments. A person using the agency said, 'I could not be happier with the service.'

In the sad event that it is assessed that children are not appropriately placed this agency works with other agencies and the adopters and carers in planning for future placements. The agency also works hard to help to achieve the most positive endings to placements as are possible.

Service delivery

The provision is outstanding.

The agency ensures that adoptive families who are not aware of their right to an assessment of support needs by their local authority, are informed about this right. The agency also offers to help in negotiating, with local authorities, access to services. This ensures that families are supported to get the services they need to secure safe stable and secure placements for children are maintained.

The agency carries out comprehensive assessments of needs and develops clear, evidence based recommendations about each individual case. These assessments feed into the local authority decision making processes about long-term plans for children and local authorities have found these assessments very insightful. One social worker stated that the assessment was 'spot on'. He went on to explain that the assessment had been used to place the children in an appropriate placement that is meeting the children's needs exceptionally well; the children are reported as being very pleased with their new situation.

The calibre of staff working for the purposes of the agency is high. The staff and the manager have excellent skills and knowledge about their respective disciplines and ensure that the agency operates in a highly professional way. Feedback from other agencies show that there is clarity and a shared understanding about how each individual piece of work is organised and managed and each workers role is clear. It was also commented that all working for the agency show respect and concern for all those they are working with; including the carers, the professional network and, most importantly, the child.

Fitness to provide or manage an adoption support agency

The provision is outstanding.

The manager of the service is very experienced and skilled and appropriately qualified to carry out therapeutic work with children and adults affected by adoption. She ensures that the quality of the work carried out is of a very high standard and is a very experienced manager. She does not have a management qualification that meets the minimum standards. However, there has been no impact of this on the quality of the work and the support provided to staff. Nonetheless a recommendation has been made asking her to consider enrolling on such a course.

Management of the adoption support agency

The provision is outstanding.

The agency is managed in an ethical and effective way to ensure that an outstanding quality service is provided to all using the agency. For example, the monitoring processes are carried out on an ongoing and individualised basis in relation to each case. This ensures that any issues arising can be addressed before they are problematic.

The way in which the agency works ensures that the promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. There is a high level of respect shown to all who use and work for the service and all people's views and contributions are highly valued by the manager and the director. This agency works in a way that promotes the dignity and integrity of all who come into contact with the agency through the non-judgemental approach taken in all aspects of the work.

Employment and management of staff and volunteers

The provision is outstanding.

The agency carries out robust checks on potential therapists to ensure they are suitable people to be working for the agency. The therapists and the manager are of a very high calibre and are totally committed to ensuring that children achieve positive outcomes. The very complex work that the agency takes on is carried out with a very high level of skill by people who are very experienced in their respective roles. The very sensitive approach taken and the concern shown about all involved, supports adopters and carers, children and the professionals to fully engage in the work carried out; this achieves the best outcomes for children possible and thus improves their life chances.

Individual practitioners

The provision is not judged.

Complaints and representations

The provision is outstanding.

The agency takes a robust approach to ensuring that all people using the agency are fully consulted and are satisfied with the work. The manager and therapists are especially astute in picking up on people's dissatisfaction and addressing their fears and worries on an ongoing basis. Close monitoring processes also ensure that issues are addressed before they become problematic. This approach has contributed to there having been no formal complaints made since the agency was set up.

Records

The provision is good.

Records are made and maintained to a high standard. The arrangements for ensuring the safety and security of records are sound and confidentiality is fully respected. Some of the records maintained provide useful information for children and their carers and parents to help them develop a clear understanding about the child's history; they are also useful in the event that a child returns to therapy at a later point in their lives.

Fitness of premises

The provision is good.

The agency tends to work with clients on their premises or from rented rooms. On occasion service users may be seen at the office based within the provider's own home. These arrangements ensure that the most appropriate venue is used.

There are appropriate arrangement for the administration of the agency; these ensure that information is stored safely and securely.

Financial requirements

The provision is good.

The agency is effectively run and this ensures that it is financially viable.

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered provider(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.

Recommendations

These recommendations relate to the National Minimum Standards and are seen as good practice for the registered provider(s) to consider carrying out.

Safeguarding and promoting	submit the amended safeguarding procedure to the Local Safeguarding Children Board for consideration and comment (NMS 22.4)
Fitness to provide service	give consideration to the manager taking a qualification in management at a least level four. (NMS 19.3)