

Cornerstone

Cornerstone Adoption And Fostering Service

Room 2, Oxford House, Sixth Avenue, Doncaster Finningley Airport, Doncaster DN9 3GG

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this adoption support agency

This service is a registered Christian faith-based charity. The agency operates an independent fostering agency as well as this adoption support agency. The independent fostering agency is inspected separately.

The agency offers to provide adoption support services, including birth records counselling and intermediary services, to those families who previously fostered through the independent fostering agency and who then adopted the children who they had fostered. At the time of the inspection, the agency was providing formal post-adoption support to one family and informal support to three families.

Inspection dates: 31 January to 2 February 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: 20 March 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgement

Overall experiences and progress of service users: good

This agency provides adoption support service to individuals that have been involved previously with the agency's fostering service. Services are tailored to meet the adoptive family and children's needs. These services are sensitively delivered. There are detailed quality assurance systems in place. This ensures that good outcomes are achieved for those using the services. There have been no placement disruptions.

The agency is focused on meeting the individual needs of its service users; because of this, it makes a positive difference in their lives. Service users are clear about the desired outcome. This is because staff undertake clear initial assessments of need. These assessments target key issues and the outcomes that service users want to achieve. One adopter commented, 'This agency has given us the opportunities for peer support. Our children have made friends with other adopted children. These friendships are for life.'

The agency holds events where it brings together adopted children and their families. These events include a range of recreational opportunities. Children's self-esteem and confidence increase and they develop a more positive sense of identity. Children's relationships with their adoptive parents improve. Staff ensure that they take photographs of these occasions. This helps children and families to build positive memories of their attendance at these events. Families receive regular newsletters with interesting information that keeps everyone connected.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had some effect on the way that the agency has worked. Some group sessions have been carried out online. Despite this, the agency has continued to provide good support to the families who need it. However, since July 2022, there has been less interest from families to attend group sessions.

The post-adoption support provided is flexible to the needs of families and subject to regular review. Regular feedback from the service users ensures that the service remains relevant to the needs of families.

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

Staff receive regular safeguarding training. A comprehensive safeguarding policy and procedure is in place. Safeguarding training is also provided to the adopters. This ensures that all those involved fully understand the protocols to follow in the event of any child protection concerns. In addition, managers work with individual staff and adopters to ensure that they have the necessary skills to manage new risks. This includes providing additional training when this is required.

Adoption support assessments are thorough and tailored to the individual needs of children and families. The services provided are subject to regular review and are

revised accordingly. This flexibility ensures that families receive the most appropriate support that is responsive to any developments in the family.

The agency helps to keep children and families safe. This is achieved by the regular review of the agency's safeguarding policies and key documents. Policies and documents clearly state the agency's safeguarding obligations and protocols for working with service users. The agency has a good understanding of when and how to escalate matters of concern. Since the last inspection, there have been no safeguarding matters that required further action. There have also been no complaints about the service.

The agency makes children aware of issues that will help keep them safe, such as bullying or internet safety.

Managers ensure that staff who come to work for the agency are safely recruited. This helps to ensure that children are not placed at risk through contact with unsuitable adults.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last inspection, the leadership and management of the agency have changed. This was a well-planned transition. Leaders and managers are visible to both staff and the adopters. The registered manager and responsible individual understand the strengths and areas for development of the agency. The manager has a good oversight of the interventions that the agency is providing for children and families and can talk in detail about the progress that is being achieved.

The agency has sufficient staff to manage its current workload. Staff are qualified practitioners. They demonstrate the skills and knowledge required to provide effective post-adoption support. The agency provides its staff with good levels of training. It is proactive in doing so, which ensures that it has staff qualified in the services that the agency provides.

Staff receive good levels of support from managers and say that they feel valued. They benefit from regular team meetings which are used as a forum to learn and share ideas. Supervision is reflective and regular. This helps staff to continue to develop the skills and knowledge needed to undertake their roles effectively.

The agency has effective arrangements to manage the handling of confidential records. All adoption recording is done on agency computers. The agency has comprehensive quality assurance processes to support improvement. All service users are asked for feedback. Regular monitoring and review of the work ensure that the agency is meeting the needs of the families as the work progresses.

The agency has an up-to-date children's guide and statement of purpose. However, the statement of purpose has some information which includes the fostering aspect of the agency. In addition, the agency does not provide all the interventions stated

in the statement of purpose. This means placing authorities or families are not provided with accurate information.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the adoption support agency has a clear statement of purpose which is available to and understood by staff, volunteers, children, birth parents and guardians, prospective adopters and adopters, and is reflected in any policies, procedures and guidance. (Adoption: national minimum standards, page 53, paragraph 18)

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: SC066944

Registered provider: Cornerstone North East Fostering And Adoption Service

Registered provider address: Room 2, Oxford House, Sixth Avenue, Doncaster
Finningley Airport, Doncaster DN9 3GG

Responsible individual: Eileen Brady

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Inspector

Evelyn Chafota, Social Care Inspector

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