

Adoption UK

Adoption UK Charity

Bloxham Mill, Barford Road, Bloxham, Banbury OX15 4FF

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this adoption support agency

This agency provides a range of adoption support services to children and adults through a combination of open access, membership and commissioned services. These include advice and guidance, resources, training and mentoring, as well as specialist psychological, education support and peer support.

The agency is a registered charity that provides adoption and support services for children and adults across the United Kingdom. This inspection considered the registered service that operates in England.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 13 October 2023.

Inspection dates: 24 to 26 June 2025

Overall experience and progress of service users, taking into account **outstanding**

How well children, young people and adults are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The adoption support agency provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the adoption support agency contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for service users.

Date of last inspection: 17 January 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of service users: outstanding

The therapeutic services provided by the agency to children and families are exceptional. An extensive offer means that they provide only the best service. There are excellent relationships between children and therapists. These relationships are built on trust. This is because the matching of children to therapists is exemplary. The service gives significant care to this process, ensuring that children receive the best support.

The impact of therapy on children is extraordinary. Children make substantial progress. For example, one child who had negative past experiences with therapy now looks forward to their therapy sessions. The child said: 'This has helped my relationships massively... they have helped me to develop strategies to talk with my family and partner about my feelings.' Additionally, goals set through therapy for another child are being met. Their behaviours have improved significantly, and they are better able to manage their emotions. The adopter attributes this progress to the work carried out by the therapist.

Children are at the heart of any interventions and there are extensive opportunities for them to share their views and opinions. Therapy sessions take place virtually according to the needs of the child. For example, not attending a clinical environment enables some children to be more relaxed and enables them to express how they are feeling.

The direct work with parents is instrumental in ensuring that they understand their children's behaviours. Parents have a team around them to ensure that they feel supported.

The agency has developed a provision 'The Bridge', which further enhances the support that children, young people and families can access. This provision has had a significant impact on the life experiences of adopted children. Here, the children have opportunities to build lifelong relationships built on shared experiences. The project is highly successful. Children like to attend, and for some children this is their only outlet for socialising. This project has grown exponentially, and the impact it has had on relationships and adoption stability is extraordinary. One parent said: 'We can see an independence emerging in them [the child]. Their resilience and tolerance are growing.'

Leaders, managers and children have met with parliamentary ministers to share their views. Children share their experiences of adoption with the hope to inform national policy, for example by sharing their views of education and accessing appropriate provisions that meet their needs.

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

There is a strong safeguarding culture in the agency. Children and families feel safe because of this. All staff keep the needs of the children at the forefront of everything that they do. This is despite much of the work taking place virtually. Safeguarding arrangements are effective, and children stay protected from harm and abuse as a result. Staff know and follow the agency safeguarding protocols effectively.

The manager ensures that there are consistent and effective working relationships with other professionals. This effective communication between professionals ensures that risks are well understood and safety plans are consistently implemented when this is required, and specific risks are well managed. This helps to keep children safe.

Parents benefit from outstanding peer support. This helps them feel less alone in their journey as well as empowering them with encouragement and practical strategies to better support their children's needs. Inspectors were able to see the positive impact of peer support services on children and families struggling with education issues and transitions.

Therapists bring a deep awareness into their practice. This awareness contributes to keeping children safe and enhances the therapeutic process for all involved.

The strong commitment to staff growth and development means that if they need extra training, managers make this available to them. Leaders and managers provide additional learning opportunities that further strengthen staff skills and knowledge. For example, managers have provided additional training for staff in relation to self-harm and child to parent violence. Clinical supervision also provides additional opportunities to reflect on the safety of children.

The agency keeps thorough records of any concerns that are raised. The quality of monitoring by leaders and managers means that information is accessible, and responses are effective.

Leaders and managers ensure the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers. They have clear oversight of relevant checks before new staff start their employment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

A strong, skilled and knowledgeable leadership team leads this agency. They are aspirational for children and families and have high expectations of what they can achieve. Leaders and managers ensure that children and their families receive the highest quality adoption support. This leads to consistently exceptional outcomes.

Leaders and managers have responded strongly to the requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection. They have significantly improved

their monitoring of the service. This includes reporting to the board quarterly rather than six monthly. Improved oversight has provided opportunities to highlight and explore themes and to respond to them quickly. This has led to innovative solutions and positive change for the agency.

Staff feel extremely well supported despite the challenges of a recent restructuring of the service. Many stated that they were proud to work for this agency and are proud of the work that they do. Staff supervision is consistent and of high quality. A strong and effective training offer is in place for staff. The rigorous recruitment and support of therapists, staff and volunteers shows the value placed on ensuring only the best possible provision for people who access the service.

Leaders and managers know the strengths of the agency and what they do well. They are confident in identifying areas to improve and work in collaboration with the team to make positive changes. A detailed action plan is in place to ensure that they are on target with any developments that they want to make. Key performance indicators are regularly reviewed.

Research-informed practice is a significant strength of the agency. This runs through all the work that they do. The agency also provides free access to online resources relating to adoption and therapeutic approaches. This includes webinars and podcasts. These resources are accessible to children, families and professionals nationwide.

Leaders have fostered excellent professional relationships with partner agencies. This ensures that children and their families receive only the best quality care and support. Written feedback from staff is exceptional. Feedback from other professionals is equally excellent. One commissioner stated: 'They are flexible, the needs of the family are at the heart, they go above and beyond. If there is a crisis, we call this agency.'

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: 2590738

Registered provider: Adoption UK Charity

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Inspectors

Vevene Muhammad, Social Care Inspector
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