

CMB Counselling

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19 Frog Lane, Titchfield, Hampshire PO14 4DU

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this adoption support agency

CMB Counselling was established in 2000. The proprietor operates as a sole provider offering counselling support services to adopted adults, adoptive families, birth parents and other relatives, local authorities and any adults affected by adoption. The service is operated and delivered by a single individual.

At the time of the inspection, the proprietor was working with 11 adoptive adults or birth families affected by adoption. Over the past 12 months, the proprietor has worked with 30 service users. In the past 12 months, two adoption support packages were funded by a local authority. All remaining work undertaken with this provider has been self-funded over the past 12 months.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 15 December 2021

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: 12 September 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgement

Overall experiences and progress of service users: outstanding

The agency provides exceptional individualised support to adopted adults and birth family members. Service users speak positively about the support they receive, including 'efficiency, the timeliness of responses' and 'sensitivity from the proprietor'. Other comments include, 'Where other agencies have been unable to achieve outcomes, this agency delivers results.'

Relationships between the proprietor and adult service users are excellent. All feedback received for this inspection is positive. Not one individual thinks the service needs to improve. One service user said, 'It feels like she is on my team, she does everything exceptionally well. She is so committed to help, and I would always want to go to her for any adoption support.'

The proprietor values feedback to improve her service. She is able to identify trends and think about how she can change systems to be more effective. One example of this was a decline in feedback following a change in the system due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She is proactive in rectifying this.

Empathic practice ensures that the proprietor achieves exceptional outcomes for service users. More than one service user describes the proprietor as 'going above and beyond'. One example of this was the provider sending supportive text messages at known key moments to let the person know they were being thought of. Service users feel highly valued and supported in times of need.

Research-informed practice is interwoven into the support provided. The proprietor is ever evolving to ensure that her practice is relevant. Where there are gaps, she identifies these and puts plans in place to address them. She does not provide a specific service until the relevant training has been undertaken.

The proprietor's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been excellent. She was able to adapt to online sessions with service users swiftly. Planned therapeutic sessions continued, albeit virtual, during lockdown. Following lockdown, a face-to-face or hybrid approach has continued with most service users, depending on which method suits their needs. This has ensured a continuity of service throughout a difficult period.

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

Safeguarding is a priority in the proprietor's practice, and incidents are very low. There have been no safeguarding concerns reported over the past year. The proprietor gave examples of incidents she has reported in the past, therefore demonstrating an excellent understanding of identifying risk. In doing so, she keeps service users and their families safe.

The proprietor has the relevant policies and procedures in place and effective links between her and safeguarding professionals are evident. Local authority professionals shared no concerns about the proprietor's safeguarding practice during the inspection.

The necessary identity checks are undertaken by the proprietor. No intermediary or descendant work is carried out until the proprietor has verified the necessary documentation. This practice, along with the proprietor updating her own required checks, safeguards all involved.

Safeguarding training is a priority for the proprietor. All service users spoken to said they know how to complain. High-quality safeguarding practice ensures that service users feel safe working with the proprietor.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The leadership and management of this agency continue to be outstanding. The proprietor is passionate, dedicated and an expert in her field. She has sustained the high-quality service that she provides to supporting adults affected by adoption. The service offered is empathic and exceptional. One person said, 'She always tries to put clients at the centre of her work.'

Regular clinical supervision for the proprietor is maintained with a qualified professional. The supervisory relationship is long term and enhances the proprietor's practice through appropriate challenge and reflection. The proprietor ensures that her training and membership with her registered body are kept up to date. She identifies areas of further learning and is proactive in maintaining her own professional development.

Excellent communication is maintained between the proprietor and service users from the point of first contact. Each piece of work is individualised and bespoke. The proprietor is transparent and informative with service users throughout the process. Files and records sampled were detailed and reflective of the high-quality work undertaken. A detailed, up-to-date, ongoing record sheet accompanies every file, which makes for easy navigation of the work undertaken. Records are compiled in a manner which is meaningful to service users should they wish to access these.

The proprietor works with a diverse group of service users, each of whom is treated with dignity and respect. One commissioner gave an example of how the proprietor was flexible in meeting with a service user at a location that was better suited to their needs. The proprietor adapts her practice to prioritise the needs of service users wherever possible.

The proprietor maintains excellent professional relationships with the local authorities that she works with. These relationships have been sustained over many years for two local authorities. One commissioner said that when they have been able to outsource work, the proprietor is at the 'top of her list' to approach. She said

that the proprietor always produces a high-quality standard of work and that the feedback from clients has always been positive.

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: 1234851

Registered provider: CMB Counselling

Registered provider address: 32 Orchardlea, Swanmore, Southampton SO32 2QZ

Responsible individual: Ms Carolynne Bull

Registered manager: Ms Carolynne Bull

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Inspector

Skye Frain, Social Care Inspector

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