

eQuiPT Therapeutic Services Limited

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12 Churchfield Court, Barnsley S70 2JT

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this adoption support agency

eQuiPT is a registered adoption support agency. It provides a specialist assessment and therapy service for children and their families, to help children process previous trauma, and to establish a secure attachment between them and their adoptive parents.

The agency comprises of the registered manager, 12 therapists, one counsellor, one social worker, one therapeutic support staff and one administrative staff.

In the last 12 months, the agency has supported 15 adopted children and their families.

The agency has been registered with Ofsted since October 2022. The manager was registered at the same time. This is the first inspection of this agency.

Inspection dates: 11 to 13 September 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 requires improvement to be good

The adoption support agency provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgement

Overall experiences and progress of service users: good

Children receive highly individualised support. They receive thorough and tailored assessments that meet their needs. The assessments identify the type of therapeutic input required. Children and families develop trusting relationships with their therapists as matching the right therapist to the children and their families is effective.

The therapeutic support available to children and families covers a range of approaches. This helps individualised support packages to be developed in line with the needs of children and families. Adopters said that their experience of the work that is carried out with them and their children is positive overall. Good consultation with children and adopters using the service ensures that the staff take things at a pace that is appropriate and manageable.

Children and families are at the centre of the agency's work. The premises are well equipped and child-friendly. Staff are suitably trained for the work that they carry out, and they make a positive difference to the lives of the children and families. Adopters and carers confirmed this and described the staff as being 'very knowledgeable', 'professional and consistent', and as having 'particular skills in therapeutic support'.

Staff support families well so that they can help their children with their education. The agency advocates well for children in schools and provides training to school staff. This support has contributed to an improvement in children's experiences of their learning environment and, in some cases, has enabled children to access the correct education provision.

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

Staff use trauma-informed practice and therapeutic parenting techniques. This helps adoptive parents to understand the potential risks to children and recognise signs of concern in the children's presentation and behaviour. As a result, adopters are helped to provide nurturing homes for the children, and respond to their changing needs.

Risk assessments are carried out by the agency as part of the initial arrangements for any work with a child. This process involves relevant professionals already involved with the child and their adoptive parents. This ensures that any risks are known and understood and work is carried out safely.

All staff receive training in safeguarding children. In addition, managers work with individual staff to ensure that they have the necessary skills to manage new risks or concerns that may arise during the course of a therapeutic relationship. This ensures

that the staff are equipped with the skills that they need to provide effective support for the children.

Leaders and managers understand their safeguarding responsibilities. However, the systems that they have in place to maintain their oversight are inconsistent. When safeguarding concerns arise, leaders and managers share the necessary information with the relevant professionals. However, this information is not always clearly documented. In addition, the processes for seeking and verifying the references for new staff, along with the storage of interview records, are weak. This means that the agency cannot be adequately confident of the suitability of all the staff it employs.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Since the agency registered with Ofsted, there has been a change of responsible individual. The registered manager and the new responsible individual are ambitious, dedicated and child-centred in their approach. The agency is providing some exceptionally good outcomes for children and families. However, there are a number of shortfalls in the leadership and management of the agency that require attention.

The registered manager does not have effective monitoring systems in place to maintain oversight, and review, of all elements of the agency. As a result, key documents, such as consent forms, are missing. There is also a lack of clarity regarding whether those who sign the children's consent forms have the legal responsibility to do so. Furthermore, the current system for maintaining the records effectively and safely is weak.

The registered manager has failed to ensure that significant policies and processes are in place to enable effective record-keeping, and to be assured that staff supervision sessions take place. Case discussions and supervision sessions between the staff and the registered manager are not always clearly recorded. This hinders the manager's ability to hold the staff to account, and means that there is not an accurate account of professional discussions.

The vast majority of staff are positive about the support that they receive from the leadership team. The staff are employed on a contractual basis, and they are all committed to the work that they do. The staff benefit from clinical and peer supervision sessions. This enables them to provide a good level of support to the families and children that they work with.

Partnership-working is well developed and effective. The registered manager ensures that communication throughout the agency is good. Social workers, commissioners and other stakeholders are very complimentary about the registered manager. They find her open and transparent, and they said that the service is flexible and responsive, provides value for money and promotes good outcomes for the children.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person/s must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, The Adoption Support Agencies (England) and Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2005 and the national minimum standards. The registered person must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The registered person and the responsible individual (if any) shall, having regard to the size of the agency, the statement of purpose and the number and needs of those receiving adoption support services from the agency, carry on or (as the case may be) manage the agency with sufficient care, competence and skill.</p> <p>The Adoption Support Agencies (England) and Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2005, regulation 10 (1)</p> <p>In particular, this relates to leaders and managers ensuring that the reporting and monitoring systems used in the agency provide managers with the necessary oversight to enable them to manage the service effectively, and in line with regulations.</p> <p>This also relates to leaders and managers ensuring that the agency records are consistent in quality and content, and provide clear evidence of management oversight and decision-making.</p> <p>This also relates to leaders and managers ensuring that the records of staff supervision sessions contain sufficient detail and reflect all aspects of the staff's development and practice.</p> <p>This also relates to leaders and managers ensuring that the agency's records are stored and retained securely.</p>	<p>10 November 2023</p>
<p>The registered person shall not—</p> <p>employ a person to work for the purposes of the agency unless that person is fit to work for the purposes of the agency; or</p>	<p>10 November 2023</p>

allow a person who is employed by a person other than the registered provider to work for the purposes of the agency unless that person is fit to work for the purposes of the agency.

For the purposes of paragraph (1), a person is not fit to work for the purposes of an agency unless—

full and satisfactory information is available in relation to him in respect of each of the matters specified in Schedule 2. (Regulation 19 (1)(a)(b) (2)(d))

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: 2678511

Registered provider: eQuiPT Therapeutic Services Limited

Registered provider address: 12 Churchfield Court, Barnsley S70 2JT

Responsible individual: Louise Fisher

Registered manager: Sandra Georgeson

Telephone number: 07815494712

Email address: equipttherapy@gmail.com

Inspectors

Evelyn Chafota, Social Care Inspector

Julia Hagan, Social Care Inspector

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