

Family Action

Registered provider: PAC-UK

Hollyshaw House, 2 Hollyshaw Lane, Leeds LS15 7BD

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this adoption support agency

This agency employs 56 staff, of whom 41 are on fixed hours contracts, with 7 being full time, and 15 are on zero hours contracts. In addition, there are 8 sessional staff who are associates and 17 volunteers.

During the period 9 January 2025 to 8 January 2026, the agency delivered 4,019 appointments to 1,161 service users. Of these, 3,081 delivered appointments were funded by local authorities, supporting 1,043 service users. Additionally, the agency provided a telephone advice service, which handled 5,754 enquiries. During this period, the agency also delivered commissioned training events to professionals and provided group support to adopted adults, adopted teenagers, birth parents and adoptive parents and carers. However, since the last inspection an amendment to the adoption support agency regulations has come into force. This means that some of the work contracted by the local authorities or adoption agency to provide a service was not in the scope of this inspection. Because of this, Ofsted inspected the access to birth records and intermediary services aspect of this agency only.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2023.

Inspection dates: 19 to 21 January 2026

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: 6 December 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgement

Overall experiences and progress of service users: outstanding

The agency consistently provides outstanding high-quality service to adults, their families and descendants who request access to birth records or seek support in tracing and making contact with birth or adopted relatives. Since the last inspection, leaders and managers have continued to work closely to strengthen practice and sustain improvements across the service. The agency is a beacon of good practice in its approach to intermediary services and access to birth records.

The quality of relationships with service users is exceptional. Adoptees, their birth families and descendants receive an extremely welcoming and inclusive approach when enquiring about the arrangements surrounding their own or their family members' adoptions. Staff take considerable care in preparing and planning how records are shared. Each case is approached with thoughtful attention to detail, ensuring that information is communicated in a manner that is sensitive to individual needs.

Highly personalised practice helps to reduce the emotional impact when records contain difficult or distressing information. Consequently, adults experience compassionate, well-informed support that enables them to make sense of their early life experiences at a pace that feels safe and manageable for them. One adult service user said: 'The agency has helped me to achieve what I wanted to do: tell my birth mum that I am OK and have had a nice life and put her mind at rest.'

The agency operates an effective advice line. When individuals call who do not meet the agency's criteria for direct support, staff still respond promptly and proactively to ensure that no one is left without guidance. Staff provide clear information, meaningful signposting and practical assistance to help service users identify the most appropriate organisation to meet their needs. This approach demonstrates a strong organisational culture that prioritises positive outcomes for all individuals seeking support.

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

Service users feel safe. This is because of a strong safeguarding culture in the agency, which places a high priority on keeping service users safe. Staff have an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are guided by a detailed safeguarding policy and procedure. This has been updated to include safety plans which reflect the Signs of Safety model adopted by the agency. The safeguarding monitoring tools that are used by staff and managers are now well embedded.

Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Careful checks on identity are carried out before information is shared, and the agency gains consent from all parties before disclosing any contact details. All work is carried out carefully under adoption guidance and legislation. When contact is made between adopted adults and their birth relatives, the agency's staff provide effective practical and emotional support to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all parties.

The manager ensures that there are consistent, effective working relationships with other professionals. This supports timely decision-making, promotes a shared understanding of risk, and helps maintain a coordinated approach to safeguarding. As a result, concerns are addressed promptly, and the needs of adopted adults and birth families are met in a safe, well-informed manner.

Research-informed practice, underpinned by appropriate training, enables staff to respond positively to each individual's trauma. Staff understand that service users need opportunities to make sense of their early years and past experiences. Staff build trusting and respectful relationships with those individuals accessing the service and this is rooted in their thorough knowledge, extensive experience and deep understanding of the wide range of issues associated with adoption throughout people's lives.

The agency creates a safe and sensitive environment in which adults can explore their birth history and early experiences in care. Service users consistently describe feeling understood, emotionally held and well supported throughout what can be an emotionally challenging and complex process. This sensitive approach allows individuals to reflect on their personal histories at a pace that feels safe and supportive for them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

This agency benefits significantly from strong, consistent and inspirational leaders and managers who are aspirational for what all service users can achieve. Leaders and managers ensure that service users receive the highest quality adoption support, which leads to consistently exceptional outcomes. The responsible individual has been formally recognised for his significant contribution to children and families, receiving a Knighthood. He remains modest about this honour, attributing the achievement to his dedicated and stable staff team, whose members share his values and commitment to excellence.

Research-informed practice is also a significant and well-embedded strength of the agency, evident across all areas of its work. Ongoing developments are consistently shaped by national initiatives, to which the agency responds swiftly. The agency contributes through knowledge-sharing and presenting at a range of high-profile forums, including parliamentary events. Its expertise is widely recognised and highly valued by colleagues across the sector.

Leaders and managers create a safe environment for staff to reflect on their practice. They receive outstanding support, supervision and training that are focused on service users' experiences, needs and outcomes. Team members work well together and support each other; this extends to excellent administrative support, which helps the whole service to run smoothly. Staff feel proud of their work and valued in the organisation. One staff member said: 'I am proud to work for PAC-UK, and proud of what we do here. I could not ask for a better team of colleagues to work alongside.'

Staff benefit from regular team meetings which provide a forum to share knowledge and offer guidance to staff. This allows outstanding practice to thrive, with collaborative staff contributions driving continuous development of the service. Equality and diversity remain a consistently strong theme of the service, underpinning an inclusive culture where everyone feels valued and respected.

Staff practice is regularly reviewed by leaders and managers, with effective systems that monitor all aspects of the service. The agency has robust, well-embedded arrangements that ensure records are consistently maintained, securely retained and easily accessible. Case files are comprehensive and informative, clearly detailing all contact with the agency and the actions taken. Record-keeping is guided by clear policies which cover recording, confidentiality and storage. These high standards promote excellent oversight and safe, informed decisions, leading to outstanding outcomes for service users.

Partnership working is an exceptional strength of the agency. Feedback provided to inspectors by commissioners during the inspection was wholly positive. Commissioners identified key strengths, including the agency's flexibility, responsiveness and extensive expertise. This positive, proactive approach to collaboration ensures that relationships with partners remain strong and highly effective, ultimately supporting excellent outcomes for adult service users.

No requirements or recommendations were made following this inspection.

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: SC066981

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Registered provider address: Hollyshaw Lane, 2 Hollyshaw Lane, Leeds
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Responsible individual: Sir David Holmes

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Inspectors

Evelyn Chafota, Social Care Inspector

Shirin Khan, Social Care Inspector

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