

# Psychology Associates

Psychology Associates Limited

Psychology Associates Ltd, 41-43 Lower Fore Street, Saltash, Cornwall PL12 6JQ

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this adoption support agency

This agency provides specialised therapeutic interventions for adoptive families. The agency employs clinicians who are employed in-house, plus self-employed associate therapists who are based nationally.

The agency provides adoption support as part of a wide range of therapeutic consultation and training services. In the last 12 months, the agency has provided 59 adoption support packages for individuals and families.

The manager has submitted her application to become the registered manager of this service.

### Inspection dates: 6 to 8 February 2023

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

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:** 5 March 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Inspection judgement

### Overall experiences and progress of service users: outstanding

The agency is committed to and succeeds at improving the lives of adopted children and their families. It provides high-quality and effective therapeutic services. The agency uses a range of therapeutic interventions and support that are evidence based. Outcomes are measured for effectiveness. A strength of the agency is the specialist understanding of the needs of adopted children and adults, and how best to therapeutically meet these needs to prevent family breakdown and achieve positive outcomes for individuals.

Referrals are promptly responded to by the agency. Families report they value the warm welcome that they received, and how the therapists put them at ease and build trusting relationships with them. Family relationships are strengthened through effective and timely therapeutic interventions.

The agency is recognised and valued by a range of professionals such as the police, education, and social care. The agency is also consulted by government agencies for their very specialist knowledge and understanding of the needs of adopted children and families.

Innovative research work is undertaken. For example, the agency is currently at the forefront of research work to understand how best to comprehensively assess and meet the needs of children who may have foetal alcohol syndrome. Research is also taking place to understand how trauma affects the developing neural pathways of children. The agency has set up an innovative 'sensory gym' so that children can develop and experience their sense of safety. Sessions also support children to improve their balance, body awareness and fine motor skills.

The agency understands the importance of educational achievement. It works effectively with schools in the area, to support teaching staff to understand the educational and emotional needs of adopted children. Leaders and managers have effectively sourced financial support for a project that provides education and training for teachers. Adopted children and their families are supported effectively by their therapists at educational psychology planning meetings and through support in accessing 'pupil premium plus' funding. Therapists also support applications to the adoption support fund.

The agency succeeds in ensuring that each child receives the most effective therapeutic intervention to meet their needs. A multi-disciplinary assessment process has been created. A team of therapists, a speech and language therapist, paediatrician and occupational therapists undertake an initial assessment that comprehensively assesses a child's therapeutic needs to determine which therapeutic intervention will be most effective. A trauma-informed and trauma-recovery model is also being implemented, as it is recognised by the agency that all who have experienced adoption have some degree of trauma.

A group for adopted young people has been created so that they can share their experiences and obtain peer support. The agency gathers regular feedback from children and families. Young people are invited to be part of the agency's recruitment process and their views inform agency learning and practice.

Feedback from professionals, children and families is entirely positive. Families report that the agency is 'professional, caring, efficient and effective'.

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

The staff and all therapists benefit from receiving regular safeguarding training and confidently follow the agency's safeguarding policy and procedures. They are vigilant and promptly report any concerns to the relevant safeguarding professionals. Any safeguarding concerns or incidents are promptly logged in the central safeguarding record and acted on when necessary.

Children and adults know how to raise a complaint, but this rarely happens. Any concerns or complaints received by the agency are thoroughly investigated and the outcome is clearly communicated to the complainant. The agency benefits from a clear and comprehensive complaints procedure, details of which are made available to children and their families at the start of their therapy.

Therapists comprehensively record any identified risks that arise during therapy sessions and incorporate these in therapy plans, which contain detailed risk management strategies. These are used, for example, to offer parents practical strategies to use at home to support their child.

Health and safety is well managed at the agency. Fire prevention equipment is easy to access, staff are trained, and all necessary checks of electrical equipment take place. Confidential records are securely stored electronically.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The previous registered manager left the agency in March 2021. A manager was then appointed, but left the agency prior to registration. A second manager has been appointed and has submitted her application to Ofsted for registration. Following some delay, an application has now been accepted and is being processed. This delay has not had a negative impact on the effectiveness of leadership and management of the agency.

Leaders and managers provide strong and inspirational leadership. They have an ambitious and creative vision and create a culture of high aspiration and positivity. Their passion and creativity filters down to all staff, who report that they are well led and supported.

The agency succeeds in offering a wide a wide range of specialist training, both nationally and internationally, to share its knowledge and expertise. This includes training in Theraplay, Systematic Family Therapy an Eye Movement Desensitisation (EMDR).

The staff and therapists are regularly supervised and supported by leaders and managers to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge they need. They have access to a range of training that ensures that their professional accreditation is kept up to date. For example, they have undertaken specialist DDP training, therapeutic parenting training and life-story work. The well-being and nurturing of staff is a priority for the agency, to ensure that the staff, in turn, can undertake effective support and therapeutic interventions.

The effectiveness of the agency is closely monitored by leaders and managers. Progress and outcomes for children and families are closely and regularly evaluated and data is produced to evaluate outcomes. Leaders and managers are aware of the agency's strengths and areas for development. There is a comprehensive strategic development plan in place that details how the agency plans to develop in the next 12 months.

The agency employs permanent staff in both of its offices in the area and employs associate therapists who are based nationally. This arrangement is well managed by the agency, which uses robust quality monitoring systems to ensure that the associates are providing a good-quality and effective service.

## **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:** SC462558

**Registered provider:** Psychology Associates Limited

**Registered provider address:** 41-43 Lower Fore Street, Saltash Cornwall PL12 6JQ

**Responsible individual:** Susan Candy

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

**Telephone number:** 08450267260

**Email address:** enquiry@psychologyassociates.org.uk

### **Inspector**

Tina Maddison, Social Care Inspector

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