

# St. Andrew's Children's Society Adoption Service Adoption Service

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Type of inspection: Unannounced  
Inspection completed on: 14 March 2017

**Service provided by:**  
St. Andrew's Children's Society

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003003803

**Care service number:**  
CS2004080788

## About the service

St. Andrew's Children's Society Adoption Service recruits and supports adoptive parents to provide a family life for children from birth who cannot live within their birth families. The service provides post adoption support including counselling, mediation and direct work with families affected by adoption. The service is based in Leith in Edinburgh and has an office in Aberdeen. It is managed by a director and overseen by service managers.

This service has been registered since 2005.

## What people told us

We spoke with several adopters during the course of the inspection. All adopters spoke very highly of the service and told us that the staff team were highly skilled and very supportive of them throughout the process.

## Self assessment

The service submitted a full and comprehensive self-assessment. We spoke with the service about ways that they could develop their self-assessment to make it more outcome focussed.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of staffing	5 - Very Good
Quality of management and leadership	not assessed

## What the service does well

St. Andrew's Children's Society Adoption Service is a well-managed and supported service. They recruit and support adoptive parents to provide families for children who cannot live with their birth families and whose needs have been assessed as being best met in an adoptive family. The service is based in both Edinburgh and Aberdeen and is delivered by a highly skilled and knowledgeable staff team.

Processes within the service were timeous from adopter's initial enquiry to being allocated a worker to begin the assessment process. Preparation groups were provided by the staff team and adopters told us that they were informative and helped them to prepare their expectations about adoption. Adopters reported high quality inputs from the preparation groups. The service worked from a SafeBase model and, as such, staff were highly skilled in training and supporting adopters in building relationships and understanding children from this perspective. Adopters told us that staff were fully supportive and respectful when undertaking assessment processes. We found Form F's (the paperwork used by staff in St. Andrew's to assess prospective adopters) to be well written, evaluative and considered in their conclusions. Panel members provided a high level of quality assurance to the service and they told us that the high quality of adoption assessments presented to them helped to inform their decision making processes.

Whilst linking meetings were normally held by the child's local authority, the minutes evidenced well-measured matches and addressed how adopter's abilities would meet the needs of the child or children. St. Andrew's ensured that these processes were inclusive of adopters and they told us that they felt informed and supported

throughout the linking and matching developments. We found that children were receiving the best supports within their new families as a result of informed care and a high level of input from the service. Adopters that we spoke with told us that introductions were quick and that they were well supported by their worker at this time. Adopters told us this was very beneficial for all parties involved.

Where appropriate, birth parents and adoptive parents were supported to meet and discuss children at the relevant stage of the adoption process. Adopters told us that they valued these introductions as they felt it would benefit children in the long term in terms of their identity. Adopters reported a very high quality of support during these aspects of the process. One adopter told us: 'There are lots of hard and sad things about adoption and your social worker can't take any of that away for you. But here at St. Andrew's they certainly helped to make the process easier.'

Overall, adopters spoke very highly of the skills and knowledge of the staff team and, in particular, about their ability to carry out assessments in a professional and respectful manner. Both staff and management presented to us as wholly committed to providing good outcomes for children using the service and we found that they were highly effective in delivering opportunities for this to be achieved. The importance of getting it right for children was apparent in all processes and central to the decision making. Staff and managers were not afraid to present a professional challenge where they felt that this was not happening. The team worked closely with their local authorities to support permanence planning and area teams spoke highly of the working relationship they had. The service was led by a strong staff team who were knowledgeable and skilled in all aspects of adoption.

Post adoption support was of a remarkable high standard. Adopters and adoptees were well supported in any aspect of their lives that they felt they needed. Highly skilled and sensitive pieces of work were being undertaken and the service evidenced where they helped many families facing challenges in the past. We felt that this area could continue to be further developed into an area of innovation and exemplar practice for the service.

## What the service could do better

We noted that the service had been through some difficult changes since the last inspection and that this had had an impact on staff morale across the whole service. It was notable that the quality of the service being provided to service users had not been impacted as a result of this. The service had a plan in place to begin to work towards moving forward positively.

The adoption agency intends to continue to drive forward their focus on post adoption support both for adopters and for birth families; the service is well positioned to build on this area of strength.

## Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

## Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
25 Mar 2015	Announced (short notice)	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 4 - Good
12 Mar 2014	Announced (short notice)	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 5 - Very good
17 Feb 2012	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership 4 - Good
20 Dec 2010	Announced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership Not assessed
1 Feb 2010	Announced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership Not assessed
17 Dec 2008	Announced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment Not assessed Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 4 - Good

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