APRIL 2022 (ASF)

Beacon House

Therapeutic Services and Trauma Team

Parent/Carer Guidance

Welcome to Beacon House

This parent/carer guidance will tell you everything you need to know about the therapeutic journey you have begun with us.

Get In Touch

Chichester Clinic: 01243 219 900

Cuckfield Clinic: 01444 413 939

admin@beaconhouse.org.uk

www.beaconhouse.org.uk

For daily ideas and articles about mental health, parenting, trauma and attachment, find us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram:

FOLLOW US:

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The Adoption Support Fund has enabled many families to benefit from our specialist services. Here is what they had to say about their experience of coming here...

"We believed that we knew a lot about trauma as we had received a lot of training when we adopted our two children. When we hit a crisis point Beacon House were amazing at connecting us to what we already knew, giving us new ideas and most importantly, helping us feel close to our children again."

Adoptive Parents

"The best thing about coming here is that I can say whatever I feel like saying and I know it's okay. I like the biscuits and juice as well."

Adopted Child, Aged 7

"I like therapy because I got all my feelings out and everything I was worried about and spoke about all the problems at home and school. I have learnt how to deal with my problems more. I was sad and now I am happy."

Adopted Teen. Aged 14

"We have been working together and the young person is engaging with the process. I can finally see that we are hopefully able to support the YP with her early trauma."

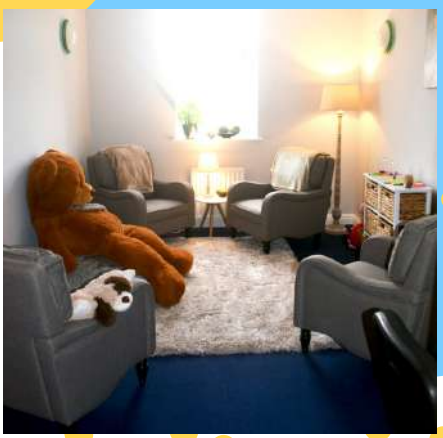
Post Adoption Social Worker

More testimonials can be found here:
www.beaconhouse.org.uk/testimonials/

Our Facilities

We have two clinics – one in Cuckfield and one in Chichester.

Cuckfield



Chichester

Our Facilities

All our therapy rooms have been created with the needs of children and families in mind. Families have described them as nurturing, bright, spacious and calming.

Your child will discover a range of toys, sensory objects, sand trays, dressing up props and dolls houses which will help them to feel at ease and communicate through different mediums.

For your teens, we have a range of art materials, games and gadgets, props, writing materials and stories to help them engage in difficult conversations.

Tallulah

You may also see Tallulah, our therapy dog, around the Cuckfield building. Tallulah can help make children and young people feel at ease and playful.

There is free parking at both clinics as well as comfortable waiting areas for families.

CUCKFIELD

CHICHESTER

Our Service

Beacon House is a specialist multi-disciplinary mental health and Occupational Therapy service.

We are a team of over 45 Clinical, Counselling and Educational Psychologists, Family Therapists, Social Workers, Occupational Therapists and Psychotherapists. We have a special interest in working with children who have experienced early loss and trauma. The Adoption Support Fund has enabled us to work with over 300 children who are adopted or living with special guardians and we continue to grow and develop the ways that we support our ASF families. We are registered with Ofsted as an Adoption Support Agency and they regulate the quality of our work.

Our Team

We have a dedicated team of therapists who work with our adoptive and special guardianship families. Here is our leadership team:

Dr Shoshanah Lyons
is our Clinical Director

Jayne Hemming
is our Service Manager

Dr Kathryn Whyte
is our Child & Family Clinic Lead for our Chichester Clinic

Dr Laura France
is our Adult & YOS Clinical Lead

We are supported by Lyn Marsh, Marieke Wilcox and our Chichester team secretary Adele Moore, who are available to answer any questions from you Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm.

Our therapists bring many years' experience, passion and commitment to working with families where a child has experienced early loss, disruptions to their care and attachment trauma. We very much understand the need to offer a service to families that is timely, specialist, respectful and collaborative - and we will endeavour to follow these principles in our work with your family.

To see photographs of our team and read about each therapists' experience, please visit www.beaconhouse.org.uk/team/

Therapeutic Needs Assessment

What does the ASF offer?

The Adoption Support Fund offers £2500 per financial year per child to receive a specialist assessment of therapeutic need; and £5000 per year for therapeutic intervention.

What happens after a referral has been made?

After we have received a referral from your child's social worker, someone from our leadership team will get in touch with you to talk you through how things work and what the next steps will be.

Our secretaries will then send you some questionnaires about your child, and ask that you return them as soon as possible. Meanwhile, we will write to your child's social worker with information that enables them to apply to the Adoption Support Fund for a Therapeutic Needs Assessment.

Once your social worker has sent through the application to the ASF, it can take up to 4 weeks for it to be approved. Once we hear that the ASF has approved the funds, we'll get in touch with you to arrange the assessment.

What can I expect from a therapeutic needs assessment?

Every child referred to our team will be offered a therapeutic needs assessment. This assessment is very important in that it allows us to understand what difficulties your child is experiencing, and what interventions are going to be most beneficial.

The assessment is carried out by a Clinical Psychologist or a Psychotherapist, and if we think it would be helpful, it can also include an Occupational Therapist.

Therapeutic Needs Assessment (cont)

Your therapeutic needs assessment will usually involve:

A meeting with you as parents/carers without your child. In this meeting we will talk about:

- Your worries and concerns
- The family background
- Your child's early experiences of care within their birth family
- Your child's trauma experiences
- Your child's sensory processing difficulties
- How things are at school
- Your own wellbeing and levels of stress

A meeting with you and your child and a meeting alone with your child. In this meeting we will talk with your child about:

- Their interests and how they are finding things at home and at school
- Their family members
- If they want to, we may ask them about their birth family but they will not be ' forced' to talk about anything they do not want to
- How they see the problems and what they hope will change
- Depending on their age, we may do some play with them, creative activities or some gentle psychological questionnaires
- If Occupational Therapy is part of your assessment, your child will be invited into our specialist Sensory Integration room to take part in a range of activities

We will also speak with your child's school and social worker if this is helpful.

Following these two meetings, we will write a letter to you outlining what we have understood about your family situation and we will share our ideas for your therapeutic intervention and the goals we can work towards. We will discuss our ideas in detail with you in a feedback and treatment planning meeting. Sometimes, we also write a brief letter to your child describing the plan.

Anticipated Timescales
What you can expect:

Referral received

▼

Reviewed by Beacon House = **1 week**

▼

Estimate sent to Local Authority by Beacon House for assessment = **1 week**
Therapy begins straight after assessment if initial treatment hours have been approved

▼

LA submits to ASF and funding is approved = **4-6 weeks**

▼

Beacon House allocates your child for an assessment = **2 weeks**

▼

Assessment takes place including feedback and treatment planning = **8 weeks**

▼

Estimate sent to LA for the full treatment funding following the assessment feedback = **1 week**

▼

LA submit to ASF for funding approval = **4-6 weeks**

▼

Once approved, therapy can either begin or continue as planned

The timeline above shows a typical journey from referral through to assessment and therapy. Sometimes the timeframe is much quicker, and we work closely with the Local Authority to make it as swift as possible, because we understand that timeliness is very important to children and families. It is also important for parents/carers to hold in mind that the assessment is an intervention in itself, because 'the therapeutic work' begins from your very first visit here.

Your Therapeutic Intervention

Developmental Trauma

At Beacon House we understand that children who have suffered early loss, abuse and neglect tend to experience something known as 'Developmental Trauma'. We have written a comprehensive guide to Developmental Trauma which you can download from: www.beaconhouse.org.uk/resources.

The Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics

Our assessment and intervention planning is informed by an approach called the "neurosequential model of therapeutics". We have written an article which explains the neurosequential approach and it can be downloaded from: www.beaconhouse.org.uk/resources.

The Neurosequential Model explains that work with children whose development has been compromised through loss, abuse and neglect, sometimes needs to start by intervening at the level of the 'primitive brain' by stabilising the child's home and school, and by calming their sensory overload. This can be done using Occupational Therapy, EMDR, Drama and Movement Therapy and by offering therapeutic parenting consultations to you as parents/carers and the school.

The next phase, once your child (and parents/carers) are stable and more able to manage strong feelings and sensory input, is work connected to limbic brain functions - this means helping the child to develop a secure attachment, which in turn will help them to manage their feelings and behaviour better. This can be worked on through therapies such as Dyadic Developmental informed Psychotherapy (DDP); Theraplay, Dyadic Creative Arts Therapy and EMDR.

The third phase would be those therapies working with the cortical brain, and which aim to help the child make sense of their life story, develop a stronger sense of identity, be better problem solvers and be able to learn more easily. This can be focussed on through Family Therapy, Narrative Therapy, Psychotherapy, Life Story Work and EMDR. Children and families tend to move forward and backward between different phases.

Your Therapeutic Intervention (cont)

Typically, a family's intervention will include one or more of the following:

- Therapeutic support for your child, often including you as the parent/carer
- Therapeutic support for you as parents/carers
- Therapeutic support to strengthen the bond between you and your child
- Therapeutic support for you as a whole family

Find details of the range of therapies on offer on our website.

Goals of therapy vary widely, but common therapeutic goals include:

- Stabilising the placement for families at risk of breakdown
- Creating internal stability for the child - so that they can regulate their senses, emotions and behaviour better
- Promoting secure attachment between the parents/carers and the child
- Improving communication and connection within the whole family
- Increasing the confidence of parents/carers to respond to very challenging behaviours in their child
- Treating discrete mental health symptoms such as low mood, anxiety and post-traumatic stress
- Stabilising school placements and enhancing the child's potential to learn
- Building family resilience for the future

Therapeutic support for adopted children and children cared for by a special guardian takes place in phases, much like a child's development. The work may be offered over a 2-3 year period, with breaks in between each phase of therapy so that you as a family can consolidate the changes you are seeing.

Therapy Reviews

Your therapeutic intervention with Beacon House will be reviewed regularly throughout and formally at the end of each phase of funding. We will work with you and your child's social worker to re-apply to the ASF each financial year for the next phase of funding.

Other important information

Confidentiality

The information you share with Beacon House is treated in the strictest confidence. We will not share any information with outside agencies unless you give us explicit permission to do so. We do work very closely with your post-adoption social worker, and we will have a conversation with you about how we manage the sharing and protection of information with them. Any reports we write will be shared with you before anyone else. We endeavour to manage the question of confidentiality of your child's individual sessions sensitively.

For some children, supported sharing of the session content with you is very therapeutic, for others, having a private space is what is needed to create change. Our privacy policy for adults and children can be found on our website.

Safeguarding

We take the issue of safeguarding very seriously. As any other health or social care organisation, we have a duty of care to break confidentiality if we have concerns that your child might be at risk of harm, or cause harm to others. In this situation, one of our Designated Safeguarding Leads, will be asked to support decision making about next steps, which may include a referral to your local Child Protection Team. Please be reassured that we will always endeavour to be open and transparent with you about our intentions, and we will always act in the best interests of your child. Our safeguarding policy is available on our website.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

Beacon House is highly committed to embracing principles of equality and diversity and we strive to be an inclusive service. We strongly believe that children and parents/carers should have the same opportunities to access our service irrespective of gender, ethnic origin, disability, culture, religion, language or sexual orientation. We are passionate about treating all individuals, regardless of their personal characteristics, with the same compassion, respect and dignity. Please see our website for our full Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.

Record Keeping

Beacon House is registered with the Information Commissions Office which offers guidance about data protection within our record keeping systems. We are a paper-free service and we keep electronic records of all contact with you and your family. This information is stored on a secure database, and can only be accessed by the Beacon House team. We store and process your child's data in line with our privacy policy which can be found on our website.

Other important information (cont)

Cancellation Policy

We ask for one week's notice of a cancellation otherwise will need to charge your missed session to the Adoption Support Fund at half the usual hourly rate. This policy reflects the mutual commitment of our agreement to work together. Our commitment to you is that we will protect the times offered to you and your child for therapy and will not offer their regular 'time and space' to any other person. If the session is cancelled by you, we are still available for your child at that time and payment is still therefore required. We always strive to use missed sessions in other creative ways related to your child's intervention plan - such as making telephone calls, planning ongoing work or report writing. If we have to cancel an appointment we will not make any charge to the ASF.

Making A Complaint

If you feel unhappy with the support that we have offered you or your child, we would like to hear about it. Our full Complaints Policy is available on our website or you are welcome to call us and request a hard copy. In the first instance, you are encouraged to speak to your child's therapist but if you remain dissatisfied, then you are welcome to escalate this to our Service Manager. We have four levels of escalation available to complainants, and we always strive to resolve any cause for concern swiftly and with compassion.

Measuring the impact of our service

Measuring the impact of our service on children and families is very important to us. We do this in four ways:

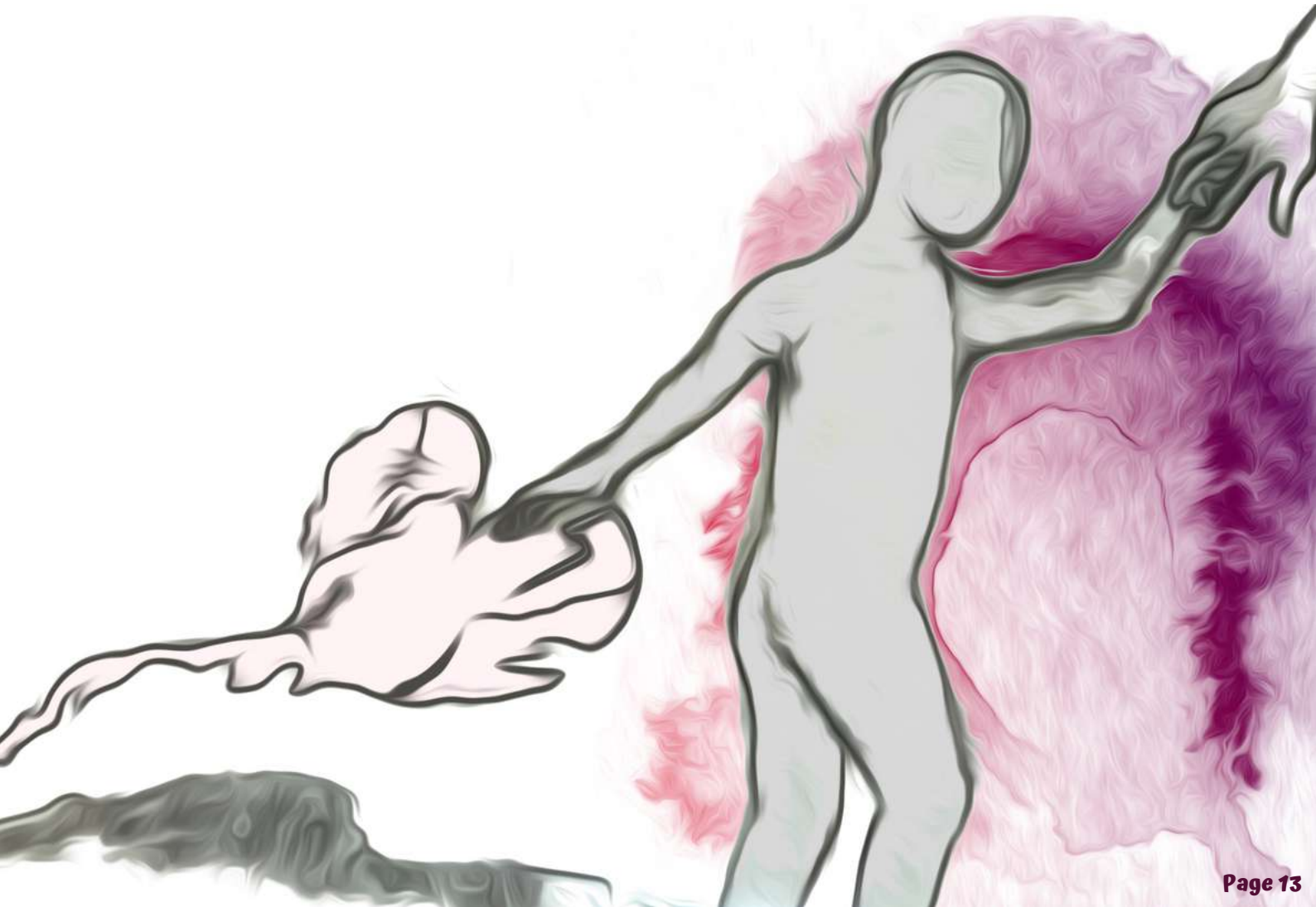
1. During your child's assessment, you will be asked to fill out a number of questionnaires, which will be re-administered at the end of your intervention with us.
2. At the end of each phase of work, you and your child will be asked to tell us how satisfied you feel with your experience of coming to Beacon House.
3. Once a year, we will write to all our families who are funded by the ASF to ask for feedback about our service.

Other useful reading

You might be interested to read our Statement of Purpose which can be found on our website, along with a variety of other resources about adoption and developmental trauma.

And finally...

We are looking forward to getting to know you and your family over time, and working closely with you to create the change you hope to see.

We hope you have found this parent/carer guidance helpful, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us if you have any questions.

The Beacon House Team