

Crown House

Inspection report for Residential Family Centre

Unique reference number	SC051886
Inspection date	15/03/2011
Inspector	Suzanne Young
Type of inspection	Key

Setting address	10 Abbey Road, MALVERN, Worcestershire, WR14 3HG
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Telephone number	01684 577 496
Email	sr@crownhousemalvern.org
Registered person	Malvern Achievement Services Limited
Registered manager	Louise Ellen Battersby
Responsible individual	Heather Ann Laffin
Date of last inspection	02/10/2007

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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

This residential family centre is a modernised three storey Victorian detached property with its own car park and a small protected play space at the rear. All amenities are within five minutes walk of the assessment centre. Families referred to the centre complete a 12-week residential assessment process either directed by the courts or by a referring authority. Some of the referrals are for child protection concerns. A rigorous assessment process exists and clear plans of the intended work are agreed with referring agencies and social workers. The centre can provide accommodation for eight families. Five families were resident at the time of the inspection. Three families were spoken with and contributed to the inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

This was an unannounced key inspection. All key standards were inspected in the Every Child Matters outcome areas, apart from enjoying and achieving, which has no key standards. The service is judged as good overall with good outcomes being achieved in all outcome areas examined.

The service is well managed and the assessment process is led by competent and knowledgeable staff. Good systems are in place to safeguard children and to promote the general welfare of families. Families are supported to be healthy and to meet children's health care needs.

The centre has some minor shortfalls in relation to record keeping, fire safety, training and privacy.

Improvements since the last inspection

One recommendation was made at the last inspection. The provider was recommended to maintain an up-to-date copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures of the local authority in which the centre is situated. This has been met. A copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures is kept in the office and is accessible to staff.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children and families are receiving a service that supports them to be healthy. Families have access to health care, education, employment and leisure activities which promote their good health and well-being. Good arrangements are in place to identify children's health care needs. Health care needs of children and parents are identified at the referral stage and are incorporated into placement planning. Written permission from parents is obtained for each child should a member of staff need to administer medication. Permission for staff to administer first aid, however, is not being obtained as required and could compromise both staff and children.

The centre has links with a range of health professionals including health visitors, doctors and specialist advice centres. All families register with a local doctor's surgery. Parents are encouraged to take on full responsibility for their child's health needs although action is taken by staff when necessary to ensure that needs are fully met. Parents are provided with good support and guidance about promoting children's health including child development, play, emotional care and healthy eating.

The use of medication is closely monitored. Medication is stored securely and detailed records are maintained on each occasion medication is administered. Staff training is provided in relation to the storage and administration of medication to senior staff who then disseminate this to other staff members.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Good systems are in place to safeguard children and to promote the general welfare of families during a residential assessment. There are a range of policies and procedures which are used to promote the safety and welfare of children and parents. Parents are clear about standards of conduct and consequences of unacceptable behaviour. They are provided with clear guidelines on admission concerning expectations of behaviour in the centre.

The welfare of children and vulnerable adults is promoted. Appropriate responses are made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse. Staff closely monitor children's care and make detailed observations of parenting capacity in relation to the safety of children. Safeguarding training is provided for staff. There are clear risk assessments in place for parents and children on admission to the centre which are reviewed and updated when necessary.

Families are made aware of how to make a complaint when they arrive at the centre. There have been three complaints since the last inspection which have been dealt with appropriately and without delay. Staff at the centre continue to receive many compliments from parents, solicitors and placing social workers thanking them for

their professionalism and for their care and support towards families.

The privacy of parents and children is respected. Families have individual sleeping accommodation and staff are aware of the need to respect privacy while prioritising the wellbeing of children. Some baby monitors, however, are positioned within the rooms of parents which compromise privacy. Information about families is stored appropriately and securely.

Families are protected by robust staff recruitment procedures. Staff personnel files are kept at head office and are audited on an annual basis. Robust systems are in place to make suitability decisions about staff and records are maintained to a high standard. All required checks are undertaken prior to staff commencing work in the centre. There is a limited use of agency staff supplied through a sole agency. All visitors to the home are required to provide evidence of their identity and to sign a visitor's book.

Families stay in accommodation that provides physical safety and security. Environmental risk assessments are conducted and staff regularly check emergency equipment, lighting and fire alarms. Fire drills are taking place on a monthly basis although night time fire drills are not being conducted. This has the potential to compromise the safety of families and staff at night.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

No national minimum standards are allocated to this outcome.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children and families are supported to make a positive contribution to their individual placement plans and the assessment process. There is robust pre placement planning and families are fully engaged in the assessment process and in their care planning. Risk assessments are conducted on admission and these are reviewed when required.

The centre uses its own residential assessment plan (RAP) to outline how the assessment will be undertaken. This is agreed within a planning meeting involving parents and placing social workers. This document, however, is not reviewed and updated during the assessment to reflect changes in families circumstances or reflect changes in the assessment process. This has the potential for inaccurate or inappropriate care and support being offered to families.

Staff and families are, however, clear about the objectives of the placement. There are detailed daily observations of parenting capacity and the progress of the assessment is recorded. Parents are enabled to address poor parenting skills and are

given weekly feedback about how they are progressing. Parents staying in the centre on the whole are happy with the service they are receiving.

The assessment process highlights families' progress and any shortfalls. There is a structured review process held at five and 10 weeks. Staff prepare assessment reports which evaluate and analyses the work undertaken with families. Parents, social workers guardians and solicitors are fully involved in the review meetings.

Staff value families' views and opinions. Parent's views are incorporated into the assessment processes and gained through regular residents meetings and exit interviews. Translation and interpreter services can be accessed by staff to help communicate with parents who require these services. As a result of listening to parents' views, the centre has revised the policy in respect of departure for families whose assessment has had a negative recommendation to allow a more paced and sympathetic approach. A night log to monitor the activities of night staff has also been instigated.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Families are provided with suitable and comfortable accommodation which is appropriate to their individual needs and also supports the assessment process. Each family has their own bedroom and the majority have on suite facilities.

The centre is furnished to create a homely environment; it is decorated and maintained to a good standard. The bedrooms are comfortable and well furnished. Although the building is old and some staircases are very steep, safety gates are in place where required. Communal areas are bright and colourful. Walls have pictures displaying positive images from differing cultures and staff and parents have created a colourful mural displaying differing aspects of diversity. There are a good range of toys and books to suit various ages.

Office accommodation is situated in close proximity to families, which supports the assessment process and provides families with easy access to staff.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The centre is well organised and managed to ensure that parents and children receive the care and services they need.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. There is a commitment from staff to promote diversity and support families who are disadvantaged. Individual needs are identified and considered during pre planning as throughout the assessment. Parents with learning difficulties are supported. Staff use pictures to support families to understand what is required. The centre is able to support parents with different

cultural and religious requirements.

There is a Statement of Purpose describing the facilities and services provided by the centre. This however does not include the qualifications and experience of all staff who work at the home. There is also a resident's guide to ensure parents who use the centre know what they can expect and how they will be treated. This however does not clearly describe the arrangements for protecting children or the responsibilities of staff with regard to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Staffing arrangements are organised to support the effective management of the centre and to meet the needs of parents and children. The Registered Manager is currently on maternity leave and is due to return to work in the near future. The centre has during this time been managed by a temporary manager who is supported by appropriately qualified and experienced staff. The assessment process is led by competent and knowledgeable staff. Staffing levels are risk assessed and adjusted when required.

A core programme of training is provided which includes, safeguarding children, medication awareness, first aid, food hygiene, de-escalation and fire safety. Further training in child development and attachment has recently been provided for staff; however, programmes of training in specific areas pertinent to residential family centres are not routinely offered to staff. This training is required in order to fully equip staff with the skills needed to fulfil the purpose of the centre.

Good processes are in place to monitor and audit the quality of the care being provided. Monthly monitoring reports are undertaken by the centre's manager and directors. This ensures that the centre is able to adapt and improve the quality of services offered to families.

There are however some minor administrative shortfalls which do not compromise the quality of service provided to families. The record in the form of a register of families using the centre does not include, the reason why they ceased to be accommodated, the name and address of their general practitioner and the name address and telephone number of the local authority responsible for the child's care. The daily log of events does not include details of illness or injury affecting residents and the record in respect of people employed at the centre does not include gender.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Residential Family Centres Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Std.	Action	Due date
1	ensure the Statement of Purpose and residents guide includes the required information (Regulation 4)	31/03/2011
25	ensure all the records specified in Schedule 4 are maintained (Regulation 19(3))	31/03/2011

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure written permission is obtained from parents for each child should a staff member need to administer first aid (NMS 4.3)
- ensure that the privacy of parents are balanced appropriately with the need to protect children (NMS 9.1)
- ensure fire drills are held at night (NMS 22.6)
- ensure the placement plan is amended as necessary to reflect significant changes in the circumstances in the family (NMS 3.8)
- ensure programmes of training is available to staff which address specific child care and family work approaches and skills appropriate to the centre's purpose and function. (NMS 18.5)