

Jamma Umoja

Inspection report for residential family centre

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Inspector	Caroline Wilson
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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 privately run Residential Family Centre offers assessment and treatment services for a maximum of nine families. Referrals to the centre are largely received from the courts across the UK to enable a full assessment to be undertaken on parents and their parenting skills with their children under close observation and supervision.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Parents and children receive excellent care. The relationships between families and staff are based on respect, honesty and openness. This means that families engage well and the welfare of children and vulnerable adults are safeguarded. The centre ensures that safeguarding children is a priority.

Staff are highly qualified and trained in the assessment of parents and children. They carefully consider parents' capacity to care for their children. Assessments and the resulting decisions are evidenced based. The service has excellent relationships with other professionals, who consider the psychological, physical and emotional needs of parents and children. The quality of the service is regularly reviewed; where appropriate changes are made which benefit the individual needs of parents and children.

Parents and children placed are treated fairly and with respect. They are constantly kept updated with the assessment and this means that they understand the work being carried out.

Improvements since the last inspection

No statutory requirements were made at the last inspection. Good practice recommendations were made and these have all been acted upon. As a consequence: staff recruitment information is now kept at the centre and it is therefore readily available for inspection; the child protection procedures have been updated and staff have received annual training to ensure that they continue to provide appropriate responses to any safeguarding concerns; risk assessments are undertaken in relation to the environment to ensure that it is physically safe for parents and children.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

This service is excellent at working with parents and children with a range of health needs including needs relating to: drug and alcohol misuse; a positive HIV status; mental health related issues. The service ensures that these needs are consistently met. The staff ensure that they have comprehensive background information with regards to parents and children prior to them being placed. They are pro-active in ensuring that appropriate services are put in place to effectively meet these needs. For instance, by engaging relevant psychological and other specialists. The service has developed excellent working relationships with health professionals and this means that staff are well prepared to meet the needs of children and parents in placement. For instance, the service has an excellent working relationship with the local general practitioner.

The service ensures there is written permission, from parents, to administer first aid for children so that staff can provide care in the event of a medical emergency. Staff are up-to-date with all aspects of first aid training so that they can safely and competently administer it should the need arise.

Parents are primarily responsible for administering their own and their child's medication. The service oversees this to ensure that medicines are used as prescribed by the doctor. Records of the administration of medicines are made and maintained and the misuse of medicine is prevented through the secure storage arrangements.

Parents develop relationships in the community through attending community based clubs. These clubs help parents understand important aspects of promoting their child's welfare. Parents are supported to help children reach their developmental milestones and to set boundaries for their children. They also learn about the importance of play and what constitutes good parenting. The service supports parents on an individual and group basis and helps them address any worries or concerns that they have. Parents find this support so beneficial; one parent said of the support 'it saved my life.'

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Records show that safeguarding concerns have been addressed robustly. Staff are clear about their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding matters. They receive regular training, which is in excess of that set out in national minimum standards (NMS). Frequent and in-depth case discussions with regards to safeguarding are held to ensure that staff take a consistent approach to concerns. The recording and reporting of safeguarding matters are in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. The service undertakes a full review following any safeguarding incidences to ensure that they continue to provide a highly protective

service to parents and children. This includes the recent implementation of robust and comprehensive risk assessments for each family. Additional security has been put in place which provides more robust monitoring of families when appropriate; for example, through employing additional waking night staff or setting up cameras in communal areas and within individual living areas. Care is taken to ensure that the needs of families are taken into account and these measures are only used to protect children. This safeguard has proved highly effective in monitoring families where there are high risks.

Staff, parents and children develop excellent relationships that are based on honesty and mutual respect. Staff are regularly trained in the use of physical intervention techniques. This is beneficial if they need to intervene in a situation that occurs, for instance to prevent potential incidences between parents.

Health and safety systems are in place to ensure that families and children are kept safe. Health and safety inspections are undertaken at regular intervals and ensure that the home is safeguarded from fire and other hazards. There are procedures to ensure the careful vetting and supervision of visitors in accordance with the placing authority's care plan.

Staff recruitment systems are robust and ensure that only those who are safe to work with children and vulnerable adults work within the service. Thorough background checks are taken up including additional references and other information; this is in excess of the expectations of the NMS.

Families know how to complain and make use of the complaints system if they are unhappy about any aspect of living at the home. Complaints are taken seriously and executed well within timescales. Complainants receive written outcomes of the complaint. They also have the option of taking the complaint to an independent person if they are not happy with the initial outcome.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Families are well informed about how their assessment will be undertaken and what parenting outcomes they will be expected to demonstrate by the end of the assessment. Initial planning meetings set out the scope of the work to be undertaken. During these meetings parents receive information about how they will be supported by staff and other professionals and the expectations of them in terms of their behaviour and the skills they need to develop.

Good systems are in place that identify risks and provide workers with an excellent understanding of the work that is to be undertaken with the families. As well as risk assessments, there is information that highlights the scope of work to be undertaken; such as health information and children's routines. This information can be used by staff and other professionals, such as foster carers or emergency health services, to inform their practice.

Parents are constantly kept updated about the assessment process, including the progress of their assessment. Records of observations are discussed with them immediately, so that any differences in perceptions about a situation can be addressed. Parents are encouraged to sign these and have the opportunity to comment if they disagree with what has been written. This information is discussed with families during three-weekly key work sessions. Parents value the honesty and openness of staff. Parents state that they have been kept well informed during the assessment process. They added that they have learned a lot and that the support that they have been given has contributed towards this. A resident said that the centre has, 'been my saviour.'

Assessment processes are comprehensive and are undertaken in accordance with the Framework for Assessment of Children in Need and their Families. Documentation reflects outcomes set out in this assessment framework, so that staff and families are clear about the aspects of parenting that parents are expected to evidence. Examples of this can be seen in the service's case management schedule, which provides an overview of how the assessment will be conducted. For example, the schedule details if drug tests need to be conducted to ascertain whether parents are adhering to agreements or whether parents can feed and bathe their children regularly and safely. Parents also benefit from in-house specialists that provide assessments around mental health issues or addictions. The service provides parents with support through a holistic package of work which includes relapse prevention work and also considers the impact of substance misuse on parenting. An in-house forensic psychologist provides independent psychological assessments and risk assessments to ascertain each parent's cognitive ability and capacity to safely promote the welfare of their children. This is beneficial in the assessments of parents who have learning disabilities.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Parents and their children enjoy accommodation which is decorated and furnished to a high standard. Communal and individual living areas are clean, well furnished and spacious. Some parts of the centre have recently been refurbished. There is a laundry room, play room and areas in which families can enjoy contact with people who have been approved as safe for them to meet with. Safety gates are fitted and ensure that the environment is physically safe for young people.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The Statement of Purpose provides clear and accurate information about what the service offers. This document is comprehensive and provides an outline of the assessments offered and details how families are supported by professionals in areas such as meeting their psychological needs and addressing substance misuse.

This service consists of a highly trained senior management team who are exceptionally competent in making well informed, evaluative assessments based on best practice and current social work thinking. There is a strong management structure in place which clearly sets out who staff are accountable to. The Registered Manager is supported in her role by other managers who have specific areas of responsibility. For example, there is a manager in charge of the quality assurance systems. This ensures that the service is successfully run in accordance with its Statement of Purpose and related legislation. Case managers are supported by family placement assessors. They work in partnership to effectively oversee and implement each parent's and child's care plan and assessment. Staff enjoy excellent relationships with each other and communicate regularly to ensure each care package is delivered. Regular case discussions are held in addition to the formal supervision process. These provide staff with a strong theoretical basis which they effectively apply to safeguard the welfare of parents and children. All members of staff are highly qualified, skilled and competent to undertake their role. Staff also have excellent interpersonal skills which enable them to interact with families and children from a range of backgrounds. They respect each family's individuality. They are clear that safeguarding is their primary focus and are firm but fair in their interactions with parents and children.

There are arrangements in place to deputise in the absence of the manager. Twenty-four hour support is in place for staff to respond to emergencies; staff make effective use of this should they have any concerns or queries.

This service is excellent at investing in its staff, particularly in supporting their ongoing personal and professional development. Consequently, staff have an excellent understanding of changes in legislation which continue to inform their practice to a high standard. Handovers are held twice daily to keep staff updated with any changes in risk or to note any concerns or improvements in the family's functioning. Team meetings, as well as informing staff about any housekeeping issues, provide a forum for case discussions and close scrutiny of any decisions made. This ensures that decisions are made in a robust, objective and informed manner. Staff are clear that it is their role to provide referrers with all the information that they need to make responsible decisions with regards to whether parents can provide good enough parenting for their child.

Robust monitoring systems are in place to ensure that the centre is operating in accordance with relevant legislation. Any shortfalls identified are addressed immediately. Regular monitoring by the independent person also provides an

objective oversight into how the home is running. In addition, the Registered Manager takes a strategic role with regards to the service that is provided. The service is revised regularly to meet the changing needs of commissioners and the needs of parents and the children that are assessed.

Since the last inspection the service has developed practice in working with families when there are issues of in domestic violence or drugs and alcohol. They have also developed practice in working with fathers and male carers.

The service has worked with magistrates to help them gain an insight into the work of a residential family centre; this has helped magistrates to gain a greater understanding about the impact decisions that they make can have on families.