

Jamma Umoja

Inspection report for residential family centre

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Inspector	Sandra Jacobs-Walls
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Date of last inspection	11/01/2012

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Service information

Brief description of the service

This residential family centre is a family resource service offering assessment and treatment services. A group of directors owns the company and this is one of two residential family centres based in the South London area.

This centre provides assessments of parenting on a residential basis and in the community. The centre generally conducts residential assessments within a 12-week timeframe, amending this if necessary in order to meet the individual needs of families. The centre accommodates up to nine families. The centre is staffed on a 24-hour basis.

The inspection judgements

Outstanding

Good

Requires improvement

Inadequate

The overall experiences of children and parents

The overall experiences of children and parents are good.

The centre provides consistently high quality care, support and guidance, and families report that they feel safe at the centre. Parents are supported to help them understand their own capacity for change and the impact of their behaviour on their children. The wishes and views of families influence the running of the service, and there is an effective complaints procedure in place for families to express any dissatisfaction.

Staff's partnership working with key professionals is effective in achieving placement objectives. Staff and parents work together to meet the identified needs of their children. Families are well-engaged in the planning process. Staff offer support and guidance that is highly personalised. Families share positive relationships with the staff team, who manage any challenging behaviour appropriately. Children and parents are welcomed into, and leave the centre in a planned and sensitive manner.

Areas for 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 person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
17 (2002)	Ensure that full and satisfactory information is available for each person employed in respect of all matters specified in Schedule 2. (Regulation 16(3)(d))	01/02/2016
17 (2002)	Ensure that all staff receive appropriate supervision. This is to include the Registered Manager. (Regulation 17(5)(a))	01/02/2016
17 (2002)	Ensure that all staff receive appropriate appraisal. (Regulation (17(5)(a))	01/02/2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation:

- Ensure there are good quality training and development opportunities which staff are supported to undertake. In particular for family assessment monitors and night staff. (NMS 16.2)

Quality of assessment

The quality of assessment is good

Staff complete assessments that fully comply with the requirements of the local authority and court directions. Assessments are tailored to meet the needs of individual family members, with assessment methods and tools modified to meet specific family needs. This includes, for example, the use of Parental Assessment Manual and Software (PAMS) and interpreters. Parents are assessed in line with documented family placement plans which incorporate guidance contained in Working Together to Safeguard Children. The centre's surveillance systems are known to all stakeholders and is highlighted in care plans and all placement agreements.

Assessments are explicitly child-focused, analytical and demonstrate good understanding of historical events, risks and the capacity of parents to protect and promote their children's welfare. Written assessments are evidence-based and include clear information of how the assessment process was conducted.

Parents are active participants throughout completion of assessments. Staff ensure they provide frequent feedback and in turn, regularly solicit feedback from families about the process. A parent says, 'I would like to stay here longer, that's how good it is. They speak and encourage and praise you when you are doing well. I needed that.'

Staff ensure plans are regularly reviewed and families have good opportunities to challenge practice and assessment findings. Assessments are realistic about parental capacity for change and the extent to which parents understand the impact of their behaviour on their children. Parents are aware of the contents assessment reports, and staff recommendations about children's futures are based on their best interests and comprehensive evidence.

Staff's communication with involved professionals prior to and throughout the assessment is consistent and effective. Professionals make valid contributions to the assessment process. Families and staff benefit from the expertise of the centre's specialist consultants, a psychologist and a dual-diagnosis practitioner and addictions specialist. Both are available to offer staff clinical guidance and support in working effectively with families. The contribution of both these consultants provide a valuable multidisciplinary approach to assessments

Managers and staff responsible for the completion of assessments are qualified social workers with extensive experience of parental assessments and child protection in particular. In addition, the Registered Manager is also trained and experienced in delivering domestic violence workshops and facilitating groups where domestic violence is an issue. Staff have excellent knowledge and understanding of key theoretical models including those relating to child development, attachment theory and models of change. These are well evident throughout the assessment process and in written reports.

How well children and parents are protected and helped

The service **is good** at how well children and parents are protected and helped.

The centre's primary concern is to keep children safe. The centre's surveillance systems and robust staff vigilance ensures children are well protected from harm and abuse while at the residential family centre. Staff complete risk assessments that highlight known or anticipated risks; these help alert staff to potential harm. Staff then devise effective strategies to help minimise risks. Care plans and risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated to account for changing circumstances. This has influence on the nature of assessment methods and the level of supervision provided. Staff intervention is appropriate and ensures that children are kept safe. A member of staff comments, 'I'm very practicable. I like to get in there, show, model, role play. Whatever it takes to help parents be better parents. Safe.'

Staff are particularly skilled and experienced in working with families from a wide range of backgrounds who have diverse needs. Staff are creative and attend to the individual needs of families; this is a clear strength of the service. For example, families are encouraged to practice their religious beliefs; assessment programmes can be modified to take into account the impact of families fasting during Ramadan. Families are encouraged to cook traditional meals from their country of origin. Staff make careful use of interpreting services to ensure confidentiality is maintained within families' host communities.

Staff are also skilled and work exceptionally well with fathers, teenage mothers and expectant young mothers. Assessment programmes are tailored to meet the personalised needs of individual family members. A staff member comments, 'We use staff strengths to support placements. We consider, for example if having a 'mother figure' would be effective or of having a younger member of the team work with a young mum so they can better relate. We definitely try to give support to dads. They respond well to the domestic violence group run by one of the (male) managers.'

The centre promotes child and parental health and education in a meaningful manner. For example, group cooking sessions focused on healthy and nutritional meal preparation is a regular activity at the centre, and healthy 'tuck' snacks and food are available on a daily basis. Arrangements for the management and administration of medicines are safe and effective. The assessment process supports parents who are employed or engaged in studies to participate with the assessment process in acknowledgement that despite other obligations, they remain key to ensure healthy attachment and the safe care of their children. The centre promotes well parents' continued education. For example, there are plans in place to offer English classes to parents for whom English is not their primary language.

The staff group are effective in setting boundaries and are explicit about centre expectations. As a result, critical incidents are rare and families are supported to resolve any conflict constructively. Where conflicts are serious or sustained,

managers can make use of the organisation's second residential family centre to facilitate the continued assessment of parents if they pose risks to other residents. Such a situation presented itself during the inspection and was managed sensitively by managers.

Families are aware of how to raise any concerns they may have about the service. They benefit from the centre's comprehensive complaints procedures. Managers and staff take complaints seriously and they are managed in accordance with the centre's complaints procedures. Managers maintain clear records of action taken and complaint outcomes. A parent comments, 'Staff are nice, informative and helpful when you bring things to their attention. They deal with issues quickly, you're not left waiting.'

Families benefit from the centre's clear and robust child and adult protection policies and procedures. These provide effective protection and support to children and vulnerable adults. Safeguarding policies and procedures include guidance about the management of allegations. One allegation against staff has been made since the last inspection; safeguarding procedures were strictly adhered to and the matter resolved appropriately. There have been no instances of residents going missing and police involvement at the centre is extremely rare.

The building premises are generally comfortable and meet the needs of the service. The building is physically safe and appropriately secure. There are no health and safety concerns and the centre has effective fire prevention systems in place.

Working with partners to improve outcomes

The service **is good** at working with partners to improve outcomes.

Staff ensure frequent and regular communication with key partners. Staff collaboration with local authority social workers, guardians and court is effective. This is routine practice and ensures all stakeholders are apprised of placement progress and issues.

Key partners' involvement in placement negotiation and planning to ensure that placement objectives are agreed from the outset, with mutual understanding of the scope and duration of the assessment, is encouraged by staff. Staff encourage external professionals to actively contribute to the work with families to ensure good continuity of care and effective support for children and families. Stakeholders greatly value this approach.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement**.

Leaders and managers have a genuine commitment to enhancing the experiences of families resident at the centre. This is clearly evident in staff practice and the general ethos of the service. The roles and responsibilities of managers are not always clear and this issue requires some clarity within the organisation if improvement to the service is to be effective. Currently, some management systems are not sufficiently robust.

Managers support staff well, both formally and informally. The centre makes good use of reflective practice and peer support. Team meetings routinely explore how staff are feeling about their work. Formal staff supervision is not always regular and no arrangements are in place for the professional supervision of the Registered Manager. There is not consistent recording of staff supervision records. Staff do not undergo annual appraisals.

Staff training opportunities are adequate but do not meet the needs of some staff well. This is particularly the case for night staff and family assessment monitors. Managers and leaders identify staff training as an area for improvement and this features in the service's development plan.

The centre's recruitment and vetting practices are generally effective. However, on one staff personnel file, not all recruitment and vetting information is evident, while other information requires clarification; safe vetting and recruitment practices are important to ensure that employed personnel are suitable to work with children and vulnerable adults.

The centre has a poor track record in completing and forwarding monitoring reports to Ofsted, but this has very recently improved.

There is good indication of the service's desire to improve its function, operation and better meet the needs of children and families. The development plan is realistic, with clear vision about the areas identified for improvement. These include, for example, further staff recruitment, more flexible, phased assessments, and further development of relationships with a greater range of professionals.

The leadership of the service is strong. The Registered Manager is an experienced, qualified social worker with vast experience of working effectively with vulnerable families and protecting children from neglect, harm and abuse. She is also a trained family therapist. The Registered Manager has recently been involved in a unique piece of research focused on adoption, permanency and assessment. Close links with local universities and regularly facilitated social work student's placements are established. There are plans to have this aspect of the service accredited. Managers and leaders keep themselves and the staff team well appraised of emerging legislative and practice initiatives; this is evident in some of the planning for the centre's development.

The statement of purpose is a detailed document that outlines well the aims and objectives of the service. It accurately highlights services available and the assessment models used. Families receive a welcome pack upon admission which equally contains useful information about the centre, its operation and expectations. At the time of the inspection, the organisation was due to launch its new website. These systems ensure that stakeholders have access to useful information about the service.

Leaders and managers have very high expectations for the staff team and the service overall. Managers consistently communicate expectations to the team, who share managers' ambitions for the centre. This residential family centre offers families good quality assessment, care and protection. The identified shortfalls in the leadership and management of the service do not impact negatively on the experiences of children and their parents.

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 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the inspection framework and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of residential family centres.