

# Dudley Lodge

Dudley Lodge Family Assessment, 143 Warwick Road, Coventry CV3 6AT  
Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential family centre

This residential family centre provides family assessments for up to 12 families. The home has 12 flats, three with two beds and nine with one bed. One room is adapted for a disabled service user. The service is operated by an established charitable company, which also provides a further residential family centre service in a city 23 miles away.

**Inspection dates:** 8 to 9 August 2018

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and parents,</b> taking into account	<b>outstanding</b>
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How well children and parents are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The residential family centre provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the residential family centre contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and parents.

**Date of previous inspection:** 11 November 2015

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Key findings from this inspection

This residential family centre is outstanding because:

- Families receive excellent support and guidance from highly trained and dedicated staff.
- Staff provide families with constructive and clear feedback about their progress and involve them in their assessments.
- Families form trusting relationships with supportive and empathetic staff who understand the demands and challenges of the assessment.
- Staff listen to families and respond positively to their concerns and requests.
- Whenever possible, families are invited to visit the centre before they are admitted. An innovative new intranet site enables families to be informed about the centre before they move in.
- Staff provide an exceptional level of support to adults who have learning difficulties.
- Diligent staff ensure that children receive an excellent standard of care in a calm and nurturing environment.
- Families benefit hugely from a new programme of group work, which is educational and challenging.
- When families leave, staff provide strong, sensitive support.
- Staff keep families exceptionally safe. They respond quickly and effectively to safeguarding issues.
- Staff skilfully educate parents about risk.
- Strong multi-agency work enables staff to identify and meet the diverse needs of families.
- Staff offer excellent support to parents who will be separating from their children.
- Assessments are outstanding. Staff provide local authorities and courts with clearly evidenced, insightful and evaluative reports.
- The registered manager is passionate about the service. She is creative and committed to constantly driving up standards.
- Professionals are extremely positive about the impact that staff have on families.

The residential family centre's areas for development:

- The centre needs some refurbishment.
- The registered manager failed to notify Ofsted of an isolated, yet significant, incident.

# What does the residential family centre need to do to improve?

## Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Residential Family Centre Regulations 2002 and the national minimum standards. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>If, in relation to a residential family centre, any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table. (Regulation 26 (1))</p> <p>This is with reference to notifying Ofsted of the instigation and outcome of a child protection enquiry.</p>	31/8/2018

## Recommendations

- Ensure that the centre provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated. (National Minimum Standard 11.2)

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and parents: outstanding

Families are empowered to engage proactively in their assessments through detailed daily feedback sessions with highly skilled staff. When parents have learning difficulties, staff work exceptionally creatively to provide meaningful feedback and reports, using large fonts, symbols or illustrations when required. Staff also adapt group-work sessions to meet parent's individual learning needs. This attention to detail enables families to reflect on their progress and identify targets for their ongoing work with staff.

Families develop trusting relationships with staff, who are warm and supportive. Staff have an in-depth understanding of the challenges that the assessments pose for families. Some families experience high levels of surveillance during their stay, including the use of closed-circuit television and 24-hour monitoring. Staff sensitively manage this supervision and continually review it. Extremely detailed risk assessments clearly evidence any concerns and explain the rationale for the use of any monitoring. Parents confirm that surveillance is reduced when it is safe

to do so.

Staff consult with families on an individual basis and during residents' meetings. They listen and respond positively to parents' questions and concerns. Sensory lights were put into the playroom at the request of some parents and there is a helpful 'you said, we did' notice board in the hallway. The registered manager invites families to a popular, regular 'lunch with the manager'. This provides families with an opportunity to meet the registered manager in a more relaxed environment and ask any questions that they may have.

Parents feel able to speak to staff about their personal histories and experiences. They go to staff for help and advice. These are often the first positive relationships that parents have formed with professionals, which enable them to become more confident and assertive. Parents learn how to communicate effectively with (and appropriately challenge) professionals after they have left the centre.

Whenever possible, families are invited to visit the centre before they are admitted. There is also an innovative resident's intranet site, which prospective residents can access. This contains guides to the centre, a diary for them to use during their stay, videos on parenting, and an anonymous questionnaire to encourage feedback. The site is attractive, engaging and includes positive testimonials from previous residents. It is an excellent way of welcoming families and reassuring them before they come for their assessment.

Assessment reports are extremely thorough and skilfully completed. They are based on detailed daily observations (which are shared with families twice a day) and clearly analyse the families' progress. Reports are evaluative and provide accurate and valuable insights into the abilities of families, balancing risk and protective factors. Evidence supports the conclusions and recommendations including details of the future support that families will need once they return to the community.

Families engage in a range of in-depth work on an individual basis and through the newly introduced programme of group work. Groups cover key topics such as domestic violence and aggression, life skills and self-development. Families praise the group-work sessions, which are stimulating, educational and enjoyable. One parent described the groups as 'brilliant'. Staff are highly trained. Research underpins their practice and the development of the group-work programme. One staff member has been recently trained to deliver the domestic violence and aggression programme for adults who have learning difficulties.

Families also engage in sessions about basic childcare, play, cooking and safety. Staff use a range of creative training materials and techniques with families, including, for example, setting up scenarios in an empty flat to illustrate safety issues. This high-quality support enables families to reflect upon significant issues affecting them and apply their learning to their day-to-day lives. One parent

separated from her partner based on the insights that she gained about the risks he posed. Staff have recently undertaken training about male victims of domestic abuse, which broadens their understanding of the issue. These approaches enable many families to make excellent progress during their assessments and to learn a range of essential parenting and social skills.

Many families make significant progress and can return to the community with their children. Parents say that they have learned valuable skills and been able to reflect on their relationships and aims for the future. Staff expertly meet the needs of highly vulnerable adults who face a wide range of personal challenges. Parents are proud of the progress that they make. One parent who has learning difficulties was proud to have learned winding techniques for her baby. Another parent created an action plan for how to balance her needs and her child's needs when she is tired or overwhelmed. She was able to take this plan back into the community. Staff enabled one mother who has mental health issues to communicate her feelings to staff using a traffic light system. This system helped staff to adapt their responses to her as her moods changed.

Children benefit hugely from staff's calm and supportive approach. They help parents to nurture, hold and enjoy their children, supporting secure attachments. One parent commented, 'Staff teach you the highest standard of childcare.' When parents are unable to keep their children at the end of the assessment, staff are highly sensitive and enable parents to spend as much time as possible with their children, making memories and preparing for the separation.

There is a strong ethos of celebrating diversity and equality at the centre. Parents highlight that staff teach them about respecting each other. One parent shared an example of staff undertaking work to help her express herself to people from ethnic minorities without causing offence. The registered manager ensures that staff consider the power imbalance between themselves and the families. A local church holds meetings in the centre's chapel, providing opportunities for parents to meet and practise their faith. All faith groups can use this space.

### **How well children and parents are helped and protected: outstanding**

Highly trained staff place safety at the centre of their practice and keep families safe. Risk assessments are exceptionally thorough. They are updated and reviewed constantly, providing staff with relevant information on which to base their safeguarding practice. Staff skilfully evaluate parents' risks and their ability to protect themselves and their children. This ensures that parents are protected while allowing them to demonstrate their progress. Staff support and teach many parents to reach and maintain a level of safe parenting that enables them to keep their children. Staff use research to inform their practice. This helps to enable families to enter meaningful dialogue about their risk assessments and increase their understanding. Staff receive training on the impact of trauma on the adult brain. This informs their safeguarding work and deepens their understanding of parents' experiences and behaviour. Strong

relationships between staff and families are key to the excellent safeguarding practice.

Staff are aware of the risks that can be present when families live in close proximity to each other. They do not hesitate to take action to minimise risk and reduce conflict to protect both children and adults. Staff work very effectively as a team to successfully de-escalate situations if parents are behaving in ways that could harm others. Parents who pose an unmanageable risk to their own or other resident's children have their assessments terminated, but only after close consultation with placing authorities.

Staff undertake outstanding preventative work with families, which provides long-term benefits. They have developed an online safety group based on training devised by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. The group covers topics including the internet and social media, the use of mobile phones and computer tablets and cyberbullying.

Staff respond immediately to safeguarding incidents. They follow protocols and work with other agencies including health services, local authorities and the police, to keep families safe. When parents and children are unwell and need urgent medical attention, staff do not hesitate to ensure that they access emergency services.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The registered manager is passionate about the service the centre provides to families. She has introduced several innovations to drive up standards. She has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development of her staff and has plans in place to make further improvements. The registered manager is aspirational for parents and children and is clear about the impact that the management decisions she makes has on them.

The registered manager has worked hard to improve communication between staff who undertake different roles by introducing a 'duty day' each week when the team managers are in the office with staff. This has provided staff with more regular access to case managers to discuss families and practice. This approach has improved morale and has made staff feel more valued. The registered manager has also introduced a coaching programme for staff to focus on issues of, for example, professionalism and the power imbalance between staff and residents. She has improved staff induction and supervision processes, introducing group supervision to further encourage reflective practice. Staff handovers have also been extended to allow time for staff to debrief with each other. These changes have helped to improve staff confidence and the quality of the service provided. Staff are highly motivated and take on additional tasks, including providing extended weekend activities for families.

Staff say that they love working at the centre. They feel that the new group

work programme has changed the service for the better and improved the quality of assessments. Staff talk confidently and enthusiastically about their roles and the service. One staff member commented on the positive impact of their work explaining, 'Parents become more assertive, you can see it in their relationships.'

Staff training is up to date and relevant. If staff identify additional training that will help them to meet the needs of individual families, the registered manager arranges this. Supervision is regular, valuable and reflective. Written records are kept to a high standard. Families' files contain relevant information and the registered manager challenges placing authorities, requesting any missing documents.

Staff work in close collaboration with other professionals, who are extremely positive about the service. Social worker's comments include:

- 'The assessments were excellent, all information was accurate and thorough. I have worked with lots of other residential family centres. In other services I have concerns regarding staff turnover, not so here.'
- 'I was very impressed with the sessions provided. Staff were really proactive and very empathetic. The quality of the assessments and evidence was great, very well written and timely.'
- 'I have received excellent feedback, and excellent quality assessments and analysis. I am very confident that they [staff] have a clear understanding of the family's needs. They have not been risk averse, they have assessed and managed risks diligently and consulted me about any changes in risk and supervision levels. I couldn't ask for more.'

Safeguarding practice is strong. However, the registered manager failed to notify Ofsted of one significant incident involving two members of staff. Although there was no negative impact on the child, completing the formal notification process would have ensured additional checks by the registered manager and timely consultation with the designated officer in the local authority. When the registered manager became aware of the incident, she liaised with the placing authority. A full investigation into the staff members' practice was undertaken.

Generally, the centre is well-maintained and welcoming. However, some areas require refurbishment. The registered manager is aware of this and has started to make a range of improvements. A recommendation has been made to continue with this work in a timely way.



## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and parents. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and parents. They watched how professional staff work with children and parents and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and parents. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the residential family centre knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and parents whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Residential Family Centre Regulations 2002 and the national minimum standards.

## Residential family centre details

**Unique reference number:** SC047520

**Registered provider:** Dudley Lodge

**Registered provider address:** Dudley Lodge Family Assessment Centre, 143  
Warwick Road, Coventry CV3 6AT

**Responsible individual:** James Evans

**Registered manager:** Natasha Skinner

**Telephone number:** 02476 502 800

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## Inspector

Louise Whittle, social care inspector



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