

# Richmond House

Family Assessment and Support Services Limited  
Lillesden Lane, North Curry, Taunton, Somerset TA3 6BY  
Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential family centre

This residential family centre is registered to undertake parenting assessments for up to six families. Families are referred for assessment by the courts or local authority children's services. Richmond House is situated in a rural location, within easy travelling distance of a large town and healthcare, education and leisure facilities.

**Inspection dates:** 7 to 8 January 2019

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and parents, taking into account</b>	<b>good</b>
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How well children and parents are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The residential family centre provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Key findings from this inspection

This residential family centre is good because:

- The quality of relationships between parents and the staff is very positive. Parents are given every opportunity to succeed. The staff establish effective working relationships with parents, where previously the parents did not accept professional help and advice.
- Feedback from parents and professionals is overwhelmingly positive about the quality of the assessment process, recommendations and reports. One parent

said: 'Without them [the staff], I would not have the chance to be with my baby.'

- The staff succeed in supporting the parents to access community groups, such as parent and child groups, sessions at the health centre and the library.
- The staff ensure that the centre is well equipped, homely, warm and welcoming for families. The staff succeed in supporting the families to learn essential parenting skills.
- Parents report that they feel safe at the centre. Health and safety is very well managed.
- Parenting assessments give a clear conclusion about the ability of families to safely parent their children. Reports are informative and offer a clear recommendation to placing authorities and to the court about the ability of the parents to safely parent their child.
- The centre benefits from strong and effective management from leaders and managers who understand the strengths and areas for development of the service, and ensure that these are implemented.

The residential family centre's areas for development:

- Placement plans do not always contain a clear exit plan so that parents know the options available to them at the end of their assessment. The plans do not always contain details about how the quality of the attachment between the parents and child will be assessed and supported.
- The centre's surveillance policy does not clearly state how the privacy and dignity of parents will always be protected by the use of CCTV in their bedrooms.
- The staff do not always receive regular individual supervision in a timely manner.

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

### **Recommendations**

- Ensure that the family placement plan contains a clear exit plan and details how the quality of the attachment between the parents and their child will be measured and assessed. (NMS 9.2)
- Ensure that the surveillance policy details how the legitimate privacy of families will be protected. In particular, that the privacy and dignity of parents are protected and promoted when using CCTV monitoring in bedrooms. (NMS 10.1)
- Ensure that all staff are provided with regular supervision by appropriately qualified and experienced staff. (NMS17.4)

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and parents: good**

The staff succeed in building positive and trusting relationships with parents. Many parents, prior to coming to the family centre, were very resistant to professional advice and support and openly hostile to professional intervention. Parents understand, because of the trusting relationship they make with the staff, that the staff are there to give them every assistance to help them to succeed. Parents accept advice and support from the staff and learn the parenting skills they need to safely care for their child.

The staff know all the parents and children very well. Parents report that they are listened to by the staff and commented positively about the quality of the support that they receive. The staff gather the views and opinions of parents through regular house meetings, survey forms and a 'you said, we did' process. Any issues raised are acted on and reported back to parents. The amount of baby bouncers has increased, more storybooks have been purchased and 'baby on board' stickers purchased for the centre's vehicles.

Parents and children moving in and out of the centre are well supported and the moves are managed sensitively and thoughtfully by the staff. Staff work with parents to support them when they are due to leave. The staff ensure that parents and children have everything that they need. This includes clarifying any benefits entitlements and supporting parents to purchase baby equipment and food. The staff team is skilled at maintaining professional boundaries, so that parents undertake these tasks as independently as possible.

Parenting assessments are of good quality. These assessments ensure that decision-makers have all of the information and recommendations that they need, as requested in the letter of instruction. The needs and safety of the children are always the staff's priority. Feedback to parents is undertaken daily and is open and transparent. Staff address any concerns swiftly. Parents are given every opportunity to learn and resolve any concerns, such as learning to test bottle temperatures and to change their baby's nappy in a timely manner. If a parent is struggling to understand concerns, a 'signs of safety' approach is used. This approach involves simply documenting concerns and setting out what parents need to do to resolve these. Concerns are simply documented in a way that the parents can understand. Pictures are also used to assist parents to understand parenting concepts.

Court reports are timely, comprehensive and informative. They are concise, evaluative and make clear recommendations. The registered manager is looking to further improve reports by including more evidence and evaluation of the quality of a parent's attachment style.

Staff are given clear guidance in good-quality placement plans. As a result, staff

understand when to prompt parents to complete a parenting task and when they should intervene. Children's planned feeding and changing schedules are clearly documented. Plans evidence that families are making progress and supervision levels are being reduced as a result. Not all placement plans contain clear information about the exit plan for a family for when the assessment concludes.

Parents are encouraged and supported to take an active part in community groups and activities; this is a strength of the centre. Parents and children benefit from having access to health services when they need them. Arrangements for managing medication are safe. Parents can manage their own medication if they are assessed as being able to do so safely.

The centre is spacious, homely, well equipped and decorated. Parents report that they like their rooms. They have their own televisions and baby equipment. Sharing of the kitchen and bathrooms is well organised and flexible and presents no difficulties to the parents.

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

The safety of the children and parents in the centre is a priority. Prior to a family being admitted to the centre, a comprehensive risk assessment is undertaken by the manager. This is to ensure that the staff can safely meet the assessment needs of parents and the children, and that admitting a family will not have a negative impact on the other families or put them at any risk.

Parents report that they feel safe at the centre and that the staff listen to any concerns that they may have. The centre has an effective complaints procedure that parents know how to use. Complaints are taken seriously and are promptly addressed in accordance with the centre's complaints policy and procedure.

The staff undertake an individual risk assessment for each parent and child. Staff are clear about what they should do to ensure that parents and children are safe. The staff take effective action if a parent is missing. The centre has strong links with the local police and safeguarding professionals.

The staff de-escalate difficult situations effectively using effective strategies and the positive relationships that they have built with parents to resolve any conflict. Parents report that they all get on well and support each other. The manager and the staff have a calm and relaxed approach. This helps the parents to relax. This approach is effective in de-escalating any potential tensions between parents.

The manager ensures that only suitable people are employed at the centre. This is achieved through a rigorous recruitment procedure. A range of checks and information are required before a person can start work at the centre.

Parents confirmed that they know what action to take in the event of a fire. The staff, parents and children take part in regular fire evacuation practices. Health and

safety is well managed at the centre.

The centre uses CCTV to monitor parents and children as part of the assessment process. This is agreed with the placing authority. Parents sign to agree to the use of this monitoring. Cameras are in place in bedrooms and show parents' beds. This does not promote their privacy and dignity. Parents can ask for the cameras to be turned off if the staff are caring for their child. The use of CCTV is not reduced in accordance with risk assessment and the progress that the parents make.

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

Leaders and managers provide strong and effective leadership to the staff. The centre is managed by a skilled, experienced and child-focused manager. Leaders and managers ensure that parents have every opportunity to succeed.

The manager challenges placing authorities if it is believed that more information and resources are required to inform the assessment, or the outcome of the centre's parenting assessment differs from the view held by the placing authorities.

The staff benefit from receiving a comprehensive training programme that equips them with the skills and knowledge required to undertake their role. Recent additions to the training programme, which is provided by external trainers, are de-escalation skills and safeguarding. All of the staff team are qualified to level 3 in childcare or are enrolled on this qualification programme.

The members of the staff team receive supervision individually from their line manager, or a senior colleague. Group supervision sessions also take place, where the staff members can discuss their practice and any ideas or suggestions for improvement of the assessments. Not all of the staff benefit from regular individual supervision sessions. Recently, the deputy manager has been taking steps to address this shortfall.

Senior managers recognise the importance of rigorous quality monitoring processes to support the continuous improvement and development of the service. Independent consultants have been commissioned to provide a review of the centre's services. Regular monthly monitoring takes place by an independent person, who identifies any shortfalls and sets actions that the manager completes before the next visit. An annual development plan is in place for the service. This plan demonstrates that leaders and managers have a clear understanding of the strengths of the service and the areas for development.

The staff benefit from clear roles and responsibilities. There have been some staff changes in the last 12 months. The manager has promptly employed new staff, who have brought additional skills and experience to the team. The members of the staff team are successfully working well together. An additional qualified social worker has been appointed to provide additional assessment support and will take up their post shortly.

## **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:** SC490087

**Registered provider:** Family Assessment and Support Services Limited

**Registered provider address:** Rumwell Hall, Rumwell, Taunton, Somerset TA4 1EL

**Responsible individual:** Gary Dawkins

**Registered manager:** Michael Lake

**Telephone number:** 01823 492080

**Email address:** mlake@faass.co.uk

## **Inspectors**

Ms Maddison, social care inspector  
Sarah Canto, social care inspector





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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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