

Selina Cooper House

12 Tickle Avenue, St. Helens, Merseyside, WA9 1RZ

Assurance visit

Information about this residential family centre

This residential family centre is registered to accommodate up to two families at any one time. The residential family centre is a registered charity. Families who access the centre may be experiencing difficulties in parenting their babies or young children, including difficulties with education and support components. This could be as a result of their being in care proceedings or having current involvement within the Public Law Outline.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in January 2019. The registered manager has a relevant level 5 qualification.

Visit dates: 16 to 17 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 5 December 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Inadequate

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We identified no serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

The registered manager and staff know each family well. They achieve this with understanding and sensitivity and consider each family's circumstances. The families are provided with individualised support, guidance and clear direction. Staff are skilled at helping parents to learn and prepare for the day-to-day life of a parent. They help parents settle their children into a positive routine and educate them in how to meet their child's basic care needs through a range of resources.

Parents benefit from key working that is tailored to meet their individual needs. Staff work with young parents, and parents who have mental health needs and/or a history of substance misuse. Staff demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to equality and diversity, in particular, taking into account the impact on parents of their own adverse childhood experiences.

Staff support parents to meet their own and their children's health needs. This was evident during the COVID-19 pandemic when the provider made space available at the centre for safe social distancing to enable health professionals to visit children and parents. This ensured that parents and children received the most appropriate support and intervention to meet their health needs during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown restrictions.

Children and their parents benefit from an effective assessment process. The balance between assessment, support and guidance is thoughtful and reflective. Assessments change to consider the current parenting issues, and parents progress quickly and responsively. One parent said in feedback to the centre: 'The assessment was positive, and I have learned a lot. I wish we could have come here sooner. The staff are amazing, and we couldn't have come to a better place. I feel much more confident now.'

The staff carefully plan how to help parents and children when their assessment is complete. Staff support parents to make referrals to appropriate services and advise them about community services which are available to meet their individual and collective needs. A placing social worker complimented the provider on the level of support provided to families to prepare them to live independently with their children.

The safety of children

Safeguarding is at the heart of the centre's work, with the aim of ensuring that decisions are taken in the best interests of children. Staff have an understanding of safeguarding and generally use this knowledge well. They provide a range of activities and opportunities for discussions, which support families to develop their awareness and abilities to keep their child and themselves safe.

Risk assessments are generally detailed and frequently updated. However, the referral risk assessment for one family did not consider all known risks. This did not compromise safeguarding practice as the information was recorded in the placement plan in line with regulation. The family risk assessments contain guidance for staff about what they should do to minimise risks. Staff are responsive to new risks as they arise. They quickly communicate any safeguarding concerns to social workers and seek a joined-up approach to address the area of risk.

Staff receive different types of safeguarding training, which include child and adult protection training. Complementary training includes child sexual exploitation, domestic and honour-based violence and forced marriage. Training prepares the staff well for their individual roles and enhances their knowledge, skills and practice.

Overall, staff recruitment processes minimise the possibility of unsuitable people working with families. However, the provider did not address an issue that could potentially impact on the service relating to a new member of staff prior to the appointment. This is a missed opportunity for leaders to demonstrate strong recruitment practice for every appointment made.

The registered manager has identified and addressed a shortfall in the quality of the closed-circuit television, due to it not including audio monitoring. As a result, arrangements are in place to upgrade the system to ensure that the provider is able to assess and monitor parenting capacity effectively and to safeguard the welfare of families.

Leaders and managers

Leaders and managers have shown commitment and dedication to addressing the concerns identified at the centre's full inspection. They have worked hard to make the required improvements. The leadership and management and staff team have been brought together to improve staff cohesion and maintain morale, which has benefited the centre because the staff team has strengthened and developed.

Managers have a positive ethos. They show commitment to development and improvement. They have a clear understanding of the progress families are making due to good use of key-worker sessions, weekly summaries, team meetings and supervision. A placing local authority social worker said, 'The manager and staff go 'above and beyond' in all aspects of their work'.

The monitoring and review systems at the centre have improved and the registered manager understands the day-to-day issues that arise and how staff respond to these. However, the monitoring and review systems would be strengthened further by the provider establishing and maintaining a system for reviewing at appropriate intervals the quality of care provided at the residential family centre in line with regulation.

The registered manager and staff work well with other professionals. This helps them to coordinate and conduct their work thoroughly. Staff are passionate about the work that they do with families and enjoy helping to support parents to care safely for their children. Links with outside agencies are promoted and maintained well. This provides parents and staff with a range of professional advice and support.

The manager and staff have managed the restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic creatively and sensibly. A consistent and settled staff team has placed the well-being of families at the centre of its practice and decision-making. Consequently, staff have continued to provide continuity for families during the pandemic.

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 |
|--|------------|
| Subject to paragraph (6) and any requirements for electronic monitoring imposed by a court under any enactment, the registered person must ensure that electronic or mechanical monitoring devices for the surveillance of residents are not used in a residential family centre, except for the purpose of— safeguarding their welfare, or that of other residents accommodated in the centre; or assessment or monitoring carried out under regulation 13A. (Residential Family Centres Regulations 2002, 21A (1)) | 28/10/2020 |
| The registered person shall establish and maintain a system for— reviewing at appropriate intervals; and | 28/10/2020 |

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| improving, the quality of care provided at the residential family centre. (Residential Family Centres Regulations 2002, 23(1)) | |
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Recommendations

- Entries in records are legible, clearly expressed and non-stigmatizing; and distinguish as far as possible between fact, opinion and third party information. (Residential Family Centres Regulations 2002, NMS 20.5, page 30)
- All people working in or for the residential family centre have references checked to assess suitability before taking on responsibilities. (Residential Family Centres Regulations 2002, NMS 14.1, page 22)

Residential family centre details

Unique reference number: 2483748

Registered provider: Shap Ltd

Registered provider address: 2nd Floor, Lakeside Building, Prescott Road, St Helens WA10 3TT

Responsible individual: Mary Milton

Registered manager: Michelle Smith

Inspector

Lisa Mulcahy, Social Care Inspector

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