

Chariteens Residential Family Centre

10 Khartoum Road, London E13 8RF

Assurance visit

Information about this residential family centre

This centre is registered to provide care and accommodation for six families. Alongside parenting assessments, the centre facilitates psychological assessments, drug and alcohol testing and counselling.

Visit dates: 16 to 17 December 2020

Previous inspection date: 15 May 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Requires improvement to be good

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 did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

Families largely have trusted and secure relationships with staff and noted that they find staff supportive and their guidance useful. A father said, 'The staff are dead friendly and helpful. They made us feel comfortable and have helped us in lots of ways. They've gone above and beyond.'

Parents know how to make complaints, but generally prefer to share their concerns with staff directly. Managers deal with complaints appropriately.

Staff do not consistently receive care plans from the local authority. The centre's placement plans are sometimes vague and are not specific in identifying targets, the nature of any support to be provided, who is to be involved and when the plan will be reviewed. These shortfalls do not promote effective care planning or ensure that all those involved are clear about what needs to happen and when.

Key-work sessions for some families are held infrequently. The quality of case records was highlighted as a shortfall at the last inspection, and the requirement is repeated for this visit.

Families have good opportunities to share their views and opinions. They receive very regular feedback of their parenting skills and, in turn, staff listen to what parents have to say about their experiences and progress. Residents' meetings are another forum for families to share their views and to help shape the centre's development.

Families live healthy lifestyles while staying at the centre. Their physical, emotional and mental health needs are well understood and promoted by staff. For example, parents receive regular individual counselling sessions that explore their emotional well-being with a counsellor. Families have good access to specialist help as required.

The quality of parental assessments is good. These are appropriately detailed and make good reference to areas identified as cause for concern. Reports are evidence-based, with relevant evaluative information that supports the practitioners' recommendations to the court.

The safety of children

Staff work hard to keep children and their parents safe and protect them from harm and abuse. Staff receive regular training that focuses on child protection. However, some staff are not familiar with safeguarding protocols in relation to allegations made against senior staff.

Staff's supervision of families is vigilant, and this helps to keep families safe. There have been no incidents of children or parents going missing from the centre and managers deal with complaints against staff appropriately.

Staff understand the impact of families' neglect and abuse and act appropriately where this is indicated. However, risk assessments do not consistently identify all known risks as indicated by the placing authority. Some risk assessments are largely descriptive and are not explicit in highlighting what needs to happen to help reduce or eliminate known or anticipated risks.

Staff are prepared and supported to manage families' challenging behaviour. Staff identified this as being the most difficult aspect of their work. Generally, staff are able to defuse challenging situations. However, it is not clear that all staff have received training in managing challenging behaviour. In addition, not all staff have commenced the required level 3 Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma within six months of confirmation of employment.

Children and parents benefit from the clear boundaries set by staff. Staff are skilled in helping families manage their emotions and reflect on their behaviour. Critical incidents are a rare occurrence. However, when these do occur, managers do not always ensure that Ofsted is notified promptly. This was the case in one recent instance.

Leaders and managers

Managers place the well-being of families at the centre of their practice. Managers know and understand the needs of families and tailor their assessments accordingly. During Covid-19 restrictions, assessment activities have been appropriately modified to ensure the safety of children, parents, staff and others. This has also been the case for families' contact with others.

Leaders and managers use internal and external monitoring systems to inform and improve the quality of the services provided. However, managers occasionally fail to monitor the quality of some records effectively. These include placement plans, risk assessments, key-work sessions and staff induction and appraisal records.

The quality of staff's communication with external partners is variable. Managers do not consistently ensure that, at the point when families are admitted to the centre, there is a common understanding of the purpose of each placement. For example, this shortfall meant that one family was recently admitted for a short-lived 'holding' placement instead of a longer-term period of assessment.

Staff commented that, since the last inspection, they are working together more cohesively. Managers have invested time to openly explore with staff how their roles and the centre operation in general can be improved. Staff spoken with at this visit said that they felt listened to by managers and this has improved the work environment.

Staff said that they felt well supported by managers. However, there are gaps in the frequency of staff supervision, including that of the registered manager. Furthermore, records do not confirm that all staff have completed annual appraisals. These issues were highlighted as shortfalls at the last inspection, and so relevant requirements are repeated at this visit.

The selection and vetting of staff are thorough and confirm that new staff are suitable to work with vulnerable families.

Leaders and managers demonstrate a commitment to working effectively with families, providing comprehensive parenting assessments and promoting the safety and well-being of children.

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>The registered person shall ensure that all persons employed by him— receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal; and are enabled from time to time to obtain further qualifications appropriate to the work they perform. (Regulation 17 (5)(a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, staff training should include a focus on managing allegations against staff and managing challenging behaviour.</p>	1 March 2021
<p>The registered person shall establish and maintain a system for— reviewing at appropriate intervals; and improving, the quality of care provided at the residential family centre. (Regulation 23 (1)(a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that the provider monitors the quality of staff's recording of risk assessments, key-work sessions and placement plans.</p>	1 March 2021
Notifiable events	1 March 2021

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.

The registered person shall without delay notify the parent accommodated in the residential family centre with a child of any significant incident affecting the child's welfare unless to do so is not reasonably practicable or would place the child's welfare at risk.

Any notification made in accordance with this regulation which is given orally shall be concerned in writing.

References in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 to a centre shall be construed as references to a residential family centre.

References in column 2 of the table to a local authority shall be construed as references to the local authority in whose area the residential family centre is situated.
(Regulation 26 (1) (2) (3) (4) (5))

Recommendations

- All new care staff have a minimum level 3 Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma, which must include mandatory social care units, or be working towards the relevant qualifications within six months of confirmation of employment. Staff may also find it helpful to have a level 3 award or certificate in Work with Parents or level 4 award in Work with Parents. (NMS 16.5)
- The individual programme for each resident family is based on the placing authority's assessment of their need which identifies the purpose and scope of the residential assessment of parenting skill and capacity and any support which will be provided. This programme is set out in the family placement plan. (NMS 7.4)

Residential family centre details

Unique reference number: SC474728

Registered provider: Chariteens Residential Family Centre Ltd

Responsible individual: Eveline Serwadda

Registered manager: Rita Isingoma

Inspector

Sandra Jacobs-Walls, Social Care Inspector

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