

# Newington Manor Family Support Service

Newington Manor, Callaways Lane, Newington, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 7LU  
Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## **Information about this residential family centre**

This privately-owned service is registered to undertake residential parenting assessments for a maximum of 13 families. Parents usually have a learning disability diagnosis, while some have additional mental health needs. Ofsted registered the manager on 11 December 2020.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020. We last visited this setting on 29 November 2019 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on our website.

**Inspection date: 9 June 2021**

**Date of previous inspection:** 7 March 2018

## **This monitoring visit**

This monitoring visit was prompted by a complaint received by Ofsted in May 2021 about the conduct of the staff at the residential family centre. The complaint raised concerns that potential breaches of regulations had occurred regarding how well the staff supported parents; how well complaints are managed and how well temperatures are maintained in the children's nursery and parents' bedrooms. Inspectors also reviewed the recommendations made at the last full inspection.

Four families were in residence and undergoing an assessment of their parenting skills at the time of the monitoring visit. Inspectors interviewed staff and parents, spoke with a professional who supports the family and, examined a sample of records.

Parents had differing opinions about how well their views are considered by the staff. Two parents were positive that their views are well considered, two said it depended

on the situation and the staff involved. For instance, one parent said that some staff give good advice and they are approachable because 'they are good at their jobs'. However, this parent also did not feel confident about approaching other staff with any concerns. A professional was positive about how the staff had supported a parent and the difference this had made to their progress compared to the previous place where the parent was living.

Systems for gaining parents' views are well established and parents regularly attend parents' meetings. One parent said these meetings are 'a good place to chat' and that the meetings are helpful. The parents' meetings minutes do not consistently demonstrate that all actions are logged and given a responsible person for completion. This omission includes parent's suggestions which decreases the potential for parents to know that their views are valued and acted on.

The staff have a balanced approach to supporting parents' views and wishes about their child's care but provide parents with more directive guidance if necessary. The manager knows which staff need more help in developing their abilities to interact with parents and she is taking action to develop these staff's skills appropriately.

Eleven written complaints from several parents were received and investigated from the 1 January 2021 to the date of the monitoring visit. Parents receive a verbal response to their complaint however they do not always receive a written response. The investigation records of about these complaints are not consistently of a good quality. For instance, in some complaints' logs: the detail of the investigation is not verified with the complainant and the conclusions to the investigation are not clear. There is no evidence that the person investigating the complaint consistently takes account of the complainant's learning disability when providing them with a written response to their complaint.

The nursery is kept within published guidance on temperatures for children's sleeping areas. The staff check the temperature in the nursery regularly and monitor how warm a sleeping child is, especially during the cold weather. Where the child is found to be cold the staff take appropriate action.

The premises in general needs improvement in some areas. Work has commenced to improve some parts of the centre, such as roof repairs. There is a detailed maintenance list, but some items remain on the list for too long. Some maintenance issues have been on the list for the last five months, with no clear date for completion. The managers, however, can explain their rationale for how they prioritise different premises issues. One professional said that the state of the premises did not give a good impression and had not helped a parent to move in without concern. Once the parent moved into the centre, she told the professional that her experiences of care and support were good.

Leaders and manager have taken appropriate measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. They have reviewed guidance as this has changed and put in place clear structures to keep families safe during this time. For example, they are helping

parents think about how they will take appropriate precautions to protect themselves from infection when they move back to living in the community.

A professional was very positive about how the managers and staff work with him. The interim reports he receives are of well written. Staff are available to speak to and provide clear information about the parent's progress.

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

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

| Requirement   | Due date            |
|---|---------------------|
| <p>The registered person shall establish a procedure (“the complaints procedure”) for considering complaints made to the registered person by a resident or a person acting on behalf of a resident.</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that a written record is made of any complaint or representation, the action taken in response, and the outcome of the investigation.</p> <p>(Regulation 20(6))</p> | <p>21 July 2021</p> |

### Recommendations

- The registered persons should undertake a review of their complaints procedure which supported all parents to know that throughout their residence:

  - they will be kept informed about the progress of their complaint
  - they can make complaints without fearing this will result in any adverse consequences
  - any written feedback provided to them about their complaint is written in a way that suits the parent’s communication needs.

(NMS 2.4 page 9 of ‘The Residential Family Centre National Minimum Standards 2002’)
  
- The registered provider should ensure that the ways in which parents know that their feedback and ideas about the daily operation of the centre are acted on. (NMS 2.1 page 9 of ‘The Residential Family Centre National Minimum Standards 2002’)
  
- The registered person should ensure that the centre is a comfortable and homely environment, and is well maintained and decorated. Avoidable hazards are removed as is consistent with a domestic setting (NMS 2.4 page 9 of ‘The Residential Family Centre National Minimum Standards 2002’) (NMS 11.2 page 19 of ‘The Residential Family Centre National Minimum Standards 2002’)

## Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the residential family centre since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

## Residential family centre details

**Unique reference number:** SC367715

**Registered provider:** Symbol Family Support Services

**Registered provider address:** Unit 3, Little Caring Farm, Caring Road, Bearsted, Maidstone Kent ME17 1TH

**Responsible individual:** Chloe Deeble Rogers

**Registered manager:** Amy Marchant

## Inspectors

Ruth Coler: Social Care Inspector

Mrs Vevene Muhammad: Social Care Inspector

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