

# Amber House

Amber Family Limited

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential family centre

This residential family centre can accommodate up to four families at any one time. The centre provides residential assessments that assist local authorities and courts in making decisions which promote the welfare of children.

The residential family centre was registered with Ofsted in February 2020. This is its first post-registration inspection.

There is a suitably qualified registered manager in post.

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.

### Inspection date: 25 August 2021

**Overall experiences and progress of children and parents, taking into account** good

How well children and parents are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The residential family centre provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of previous inspection:** not applicable

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** not applicable

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** not applicable

## Inspection judgements

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

Children and parents have positive experiences while they live in this centre. They enjoy good relationships with staff. This is because staff spend time getting to know the families as individuals. They can therefore offer individualised care and attention. There is good evidence to show that the work parents do while at the centre promotes the chance of a positive outcome to their assessment.

Social work assessments produced by the manager and social workers are good. There is an abundance of positive feedback from placing authorities. This includes praise for the accuracy and quality of assessments produced for court. Assessments have clear recommendations based on the evidence gathered during the assessment process.

Staff tackle some difficult topics and areas of parenting shortfalls. While doing so, they continue to maintain positive relationships with parents. This shows they can skilfully support and nurture parents while providing an appropriate level of challenge. The quality of key work is exceptionally detailed. Parents are helped to understand where they are making good progress and where there are some shortfalls, through a clear infographic called a 'heatmap'.

Parents enjoy many benefits while in the centre. The home environment is well presented. It is very well equipped with play, sensory and craft provisions. Parents enjoy a variety of courses to strengthen their parenting capacity. This includes bonding activities such as baby massage and sensory play.

One shortfall identified is in the level of detail provided in the child and family placement plan. The plans are not fully compliant with regulation 13. This is because they do not contain information about the intended outcomes of the placement or consider the detailed information provided by the local authority.

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

The centre promotes and protects the children's welfare throughout the assessment process. A strong safeguarding thread runs through all records. It is also evident in the assessments produced.

Social workers spoken to have no concerns in relation to the effectiveness of arrangements to safeguard children. They reported that staff identified and addressed issues appropriately. Staff spoken to were clear about the individual risks for families. They knew what their roles and responsibilities were in keeping children safe.

Risk management considerations are part of the matching process. The centre involves social workers in the decision about placement suitability.

Safeguarding action plans clearly identify risks. Families are provided with support to help them to minimise risks. Heatmaps are used to show parents' progression in respect of their risks. These are a good visual tool showing the family's progress.

Safeguarding incidents are rare. There have been no incidents of children going missing from the home, of domestic violence, drug or alcohol misuse, serious child injuries or significant incidents between parents.

On the rare occasions when incidents have occurred, children have been kept safe. Managers act when staff do not follow safeguarding protocols. Lessons-learned exercises following incidents have been carried out, which is good practice.

Safer recruitment practice is not always followed. No child or parent has been put at risk because of this. However, good practice would be that all safe recruitment checks are returned before any newly recruited staff spend time in the centre. This includes references and Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

There are no agreements or risk assessments in place for parents who administer their child's medication. Clear direction from the placing authority about medication administration should be sought to ensure that the centre is working in line with placing authority instruction.

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

The centre is well managed by a permanent and experienced manager. She has good understanding of the service and realistic expectations of what parents can achieve. She understands the centre's strengths and weaknesses and is aspirational both for residents and staff.

The manager is directly involved in the family assessment process. She therefore knows how well parents are progressing. She also reviews other records compiled by staff. This furthers her understanding of any issues that arise throughout the course of the assessment process.

Staff have good opportunities to develop and progress. Staff can enrol on a social work apprenticeship. They can also access training opportunities including mental health first aider, attachment training, five to thrive course, baby massage and baby yoga. Staff can also become champions in certain areas. This enables them to develop competence and confidence.

Staff retention is good, which provides families with continuity of care. Staff report there is a supportive environment where they feel valued for their work. Staff benefit from a thorough induction, regular supervision and yearly appraisal. As a result, there is high morale among staff and they enjoy coming to work.

External professionals spoken to as part of this inspection gave glowing feedback. They reported that joined-up working and communication were strengths of the

setting. Social workers also said that weekly reports gave them a good overview of how their families were progressing.

Monitoring of the service is generally good. However, there have been some months when reports under regulation 25 have not been compiled or submitted to Ofsted. This hinders both the manager's and the regulator's ability to continuously monitor the effectiveness of the service.

## 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 make arrangements for the recording, handling, safe keeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the residential family centre. (Regulation 11 (2))</p> <p>In particular, when it has been agreed by a child's placing authority that a parent can administer a child's medication this agreement should be recorded in the child's records.</p>	29 September 2021
<p>The registered person shall, before providing a family with accommodation in the residential family centre, or if that is not reasonably practicable, as soon as possible thereafter, draw up in consultation with the placing authority a written plan (in these Regulations referred to as "the placement plan") setting out, in particular—</p> <p>the facilities and services to be provided during the course of the placement;</p> <p>the objectives and intended outcome of the placement;</p> <p>an assessment of the risks, if any, which a resident at the residential family centre may present to their own health, safety and welfare or that of other residents or staff at the centre.</p> <p>In preparing or reviewing the placement plan the registered person shall, so far as practicable—</p> <p>take account of any relevant assessment or other report relating to any member of the family which may be provided by the placing authority. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(c) (3)(b))</p>	29 September 2021
The registered person shall not—	29 September 2021

<p>employ a person to work at the residential family centre unless that person is fit to work at a residential family centre; or</p> <p>allow a person to whom paragraph (2) applies, to work at the residential family centre unless that person is fit to work at a residential family centre.</p> <p>For the purposes of paragraph (1), a person is not fit to work at a residential family centre unless—</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to him in respect of each of the matters specified in Schedule 2. (Regulation 16 (1)(a)(b) (3)(d))</p> <p>In particular that no person should start work, shadow shifts or induction training in the centre until the organisation is in receipt of all relevant recruitment checks.</p>	
<p>Where the registered provider is an organisation or a partnership, the residential family centre shall be visited in accordance with this regulation by—</p> <p>the responsible individual or one of the partners, as the case may be;</p> <p>another of the directors or other persons responsible for the management of the organisation or partnership; or</p> <p>an employee of the organisation or partnership who is not directly concerned with the conduct of the residential family centre.</p> <p>Visits under paragraph (1) or (2) shall take place at least once a month and may be unannounced. (Regulation 25 (2)(a)(b)(c) (3))</p>	<p>29 September 2021</p>

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and parents 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:** 2567620

**Registered provider:** Amber Family Limited

**Registered provider address:** KA Farr & Co Chartered Accountants, 6-8 Botanic Road, Southport, Lancashire PR9 7NG

**Responsible individual:** Carol Benbow

**Registered manager:** Gillian Whalley

**Telephone number:** 01704 807170

**Email address:** carol@amberfamily.co.uk

## **Inspectors**

Charlie Bamber, Social Care Inspector

Cheryl Field, Social Care Inspector

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