

Orchard House Greenway Road

Orchard House Family Assessment Centre Limited

184 Greenway Road, Taunton, Somerset TA2 6LH

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential family centre

Orchard House is a privately owned residential family centre. It is registered to accommodate up to five families who are referred for assessment to the centre by the courts or local authority children's services. It is situated close to town and within easy access to amenities.

There is a registered manager in post.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 February 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and parents, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and parents are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The residential family centre provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the residential family centre contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and parents.

Date of previous inspection: 11 March 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and parents: outstanding

The centre is decorated and maintained to a high standard. It provides a homely and welcoming environment for parents and children. There is an embedded nurturing ethos throughout the staff team. Parents are treated with kindness and respect. This helps parents immensely as they enter an understandably intrusive assessment process.

When parents arrive, they are given thorough advice and guidance about how they will be assessed. This includes a respectful approach towards the use of CCTV, which promotes parents' rights to privacy and dignity. Full consideration is also given to the need for mental health support and how this can be facilitated.

Parents and children benefit from holistic, well-coordinated assessment and support packages. This has helped many parents gain the skills needed to parent safely. Some parents also benefit from continued therapy after they have finished their assessments and left the centre.

Feedback from parents is consistently sought and their views are fully considered within progress reports. Any complaints are well managed and respectful responses are provided which clarify any action taken because of a complaint.

A journey of the child booklet is completed for each child who lives at the centre. This provides children with meaningful narrative about their early lives when they are older.

One parent told the inspector that she has gained immensely from her assessment. She commented to the inspector that she has learned so much and wishes she had been given this opportunity with her previous children. Another parent has just arrived at the centre; she had initially felt anxious, but said she was reassured by the kind approach of staff towards her.

At times, parents and children have not benefited from positive endings. The appropriate housing and support are not always in place when families move on. When other professionals do not fulfil their responsibilities, challenge from the registered manager is lacking.

How well children and parents are helped and protected: good

Safeguarding concerns are managed well. Actions taken are timely and robust. This includes when referrals to the local authority designated officer are required.

The health needs of both children and parents are clearly explored when parents arrive. Parents are enabled to keep their own medication. Only controlled drugs are double locked away as per guidance.

Parents are supported to register with a GP local to the centre as soon as possible. Staff also work closely with health visitors, with a monthly clinic being run from a satellite office. This helps parents to access current advice.

Risk assessments and guidance are clear and accessible to staff. There is also a new risk assessment system to ensure that, when families arrive, the impact of known risks is considered in respect of all families residing at the centre.

The use of CCTV is an intensive monitoring approach which is kept under close review during the assessment period. This level of restrictive practice is reduced, when possible, in line with parents' progress.

In line with safer sleep guidance, staff do not advocate co-sleeping between parents and young children. Parents who do wish to emulate co-sleeping are able to borrow a 'next to me' crib.

A parent who was not part of the assessment process managed to access the centre. Safeguards have been put in to place to prevent this happening again.

Room checks are completed as part of the assessment process. It is not clear that parents have been present when these are completed. Advice given by the inspector in respect of this was acted on during the inspection.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The centre is well run. Record-keeping systems are excellent and important information is easily accessible to staff.

Leaders and managers promote best outcomes for children by providing high-quality assessments and learning opportunities for parents. A strengths-based approach is evident throughout staff practice.

The centre is currently running at a low occupancy. This is due to staff vacancies and renovation works. Leaders and managers do not want to compromise on assessment and support standards. The decision to take in less families is a child-centred approach.

Reports demonstrate an evidence-based child-centred approach to assessment. Social workers are clear when children's needs are not being met and strongly advise the court that assessments end early if needed.

Leaders and managers are keen to raise standards and act when external feedback is provided effectively. There are varied supervision mechanisms for the staff team. These include reflective sessions, clinical supervision, and external social work supervision.

Training opportunities for staff are vast and comprehensive. Staff members feel that the team works well together to achieve best outcomes for children. Staff feel valued as part of a multi-disciplinary team, which includes social workers, psychologists, therapists, and parenting intervention workers.

Feedback from several members of the staff team is very positive. It is evident that the team is proud of the work that it does at the centre and of the high standard of practice.

A local authority social worker praised a centre social worker for ensuring that the court prioritised a child's timescales to help prevent delay.

Supervision demonstrates that managers expect high standards and that action taken to address any concerns is robust.

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

Recommendations

- There are clear and effective procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the centre. (NMS 19.1) In particular, these reports should be analytical and help to drive improvement.
- Any search of a room or possessions must be carried out with the maximum respect for parents' and children's privacy and with the parent or child present if they wish to be. (NMS 4.7)
- Staff liaise with the placing agency when parents and children are due to leave so that appropriate follow-up and resettlement support may be arranged, whether or not children remain in their parents' care when they leave the centre. (NMS 7.8) In particular, the registered manager should ensure that plans are in place prior to parents and children moving on. The registered manager should also challenge the placing authority if planning is poor. This includes ensuring that the correct escalation procedures are followed if needed.

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: SC408039

Registered provider: Orchard House Family Assessment Centre Limited

Registered provider address: The Lodge, 60 Staplegrove Road, Taunton,
Somerset TA1 1DJ

Responsible individual: Freda Gardner

Registered manager: Jonathan Parish

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Inspector

Polly Soper, Social Care Inspector

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